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MIRACLES

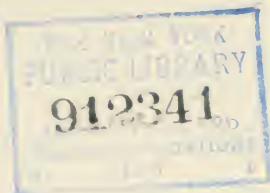
In The Light Of Science And History

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MOTTO: Truth a possession forever.

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A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

It is indeed marvelous that in our day the miraculous should so often be objected to. Many people, even cultured people, give ready credence to all kinds of non-sensical utterances, believe in related occurrences which seem utterly opposed to sound reason and the established order of things, are ready to be imposed upon even by spiritualistic mediums and to believe in the appearances of spirits from the spirit world; but when the miracles of the Bible demand their attention and call upon their faith, they unbelievably shrug their shoulders. And then, too, we live in a time of marvelous occurrences. Palatial ocean steamers carry passengers across the Atlantic with amazing swiftness, and vessels as large or larger are being built to traverse the same distance in still less time through the air. We no longer need the wire to write or speak over, we write or speak on the waves of the air and these waves carry our words hundreds and even thousands of miles. Nature is seemingly handing over her secrets to man and he makes use of her forces in a way unheard of before and truly marvelous. Did he create these forces? No! Had he any hand in arranging and shaping them? No! It took him a very long time to find out that they exist and a long time also to learn how to harness them before his chariot of discovery and invention and bend them to his uses. How came said forces to exist at all and why may man tame them and make them useful for his pur-

poses? Is there not design in all this and does it not point to an intelligent power who planned and executed? But if man is a kind of master over the forces with the existence of which he has nothing to do, is it not perfectly rational to believe that the wise and allmighty Creator Himself is master of His own creation and can make use of the forces He has brought into being as seemeth to Him good and servicable for the realization of ends He has in view?

In other words, it would seem that the men of our times have least reason to doubt the truth of what is narrated in the Bible and especially in the New Testament concerning miraculous occurrences. It is even possible that belief in them may accord better with reason than with unbelief.

In the following treatise we shall inquire into the matter impartially, having in view the truth only and nothing but the truth.

FIRST CHAPTER.

Miracles and Faith.

“Miracles are the dearest children of faith,” Goethe said. Faith engenders, brings forth miracles. It is the prolific soil on which miracles grow and thrive. Where there is religion, there is faith; reports of miracles will, therefore, be current among the adherents of all religions. We find this to be a fact. A negro of Central Africa steps out of his hut of a morning into the open and stumbles over a piece of wood. He at once turns about to worship it, taking it to be the visible embodiment of some divine spirit which he wants to appease and render servicable unto himself. The negro is an ignoramus, and are not most or all believers in miracles uncultured, ignorant and even degraded? If they were all and only to be found among the wild, barbarous and at least uncivilized or half civilized peoples of the earth, we might be justified in drawing such an inference. But such is not the case. We find belief in miracles to be universal among the civilized peoples of antiquity.

The Egyptians worshipped animals because they thought certain animals to be the marked representatives of individual gods. The bull of Osiris received the best of care and divine honors were extended to him, because the god had put his well

known and clerely defined mark upon him, so that there could be no mistake. When such a bull died another had to be searched for in the firm belief that the god had put his seal upon another, though but a young calf, and after some time more or less extended one was always found. That was a time of rejoicing all over the land. But was not such marking miraculous? No human wisdom or power was sufficient for this, only deity could accomplish it in a supernatural manner. So the Egyptains thought.

The old Babylonians narrated the wildest kind of miracles, and they were by no means untutored, —rather enjoyed a high state of civilization. They understood the language of the starry heavens sooner and better than any other ancient people. In a council of the gods Marduk is chosen chief and endowed with enormous power, in order to counteract the evil plans of Tiamat and her helpers. As a sign of his astuteness in doing wonderful things he makes a dress before him disappear and again appear. Thereupon the gods grant him the insignia of royalty and put into his hands the weapons necessary for the fray. With his net Marduk encircles and catches Tiamat, stirs up cyclones against her and thus causes her to open wide her mouth, into which he thrusts his sword and takes her life. After having overcome her helpers also, he cleaves in twain Tiamat's head, cuts in two parts her body and of the one half he builds the dome or roof of

the heavens. An array of the wild forces of nature overcome by superior skill and power. But this superior power likewise manifests the aspect of nature's doings and upheavals. All the same. The Babylonians believed them veritable gods and what these accomplished were in their eyes stupendous miracles.

It was the same with the Greeks. Some of their philosophers had a glimpse of one supreme god, their poets and historians relate the deeds of many gods, and their sculptors and painters endeavor to portray them and their deeds in marble or upon canvas. Miracles, grotesque in the extreme, but no one doubted their actual occurrence. The Homeric poems are to a great extent the portraiture of the converse gods held with men, of how they helped particular heroes and their especial favorites. By such divine aid they were empowered to perform astounding deeds of valor. Often a hero was rendered invisible by his patron deity and could thus inflict injury on the enemy without suffering any in return. But miracles are by no means confined to the Homeric period; they occur much later and were the tokens of special divine favor. The old Greeks peopled hill and dale, woods and the plain, brook and river, land and sea with gods, and there were always events taking place as the outcome of their wisdom and power. Sometimes the miraculous appears in a god's own being and life; as when Persephone comes into the home of a childless pair,

is tenderly cared for, but soon behaves curiously, does not rest in her bed but in the gleaming fire of the hearth, grows wonderfully fast and becomes more beautiful every day and all at once is gone, a veritable goddess!

Rome also was the home of miracles. The Romans were a warlike race, conscious of their might and ability to subdue other peoples. But they ever offered sacrifices to the gods and prayed for their assistance. That stone of Cybele in Phrygia (a meteor undoubtedly), believed to have been miraculously thrown down from heaven, was taken to Rome for a purpose; even then the belief in the miraculous was common in the capital of the world.

Buddhism is often not considered a religion, but after his death Buddha was deified and miraculous deeds reported of him. He caused 500 jars to roam about in the air and made 500 white elephants grow out of Lotus flowers. Once on an excursion over the firmament he emitted fire out of one of his eyes, water out of the other. If such fooleries and nonsensical occurrences were related in the Bible, skeptics could not be blamed for disbelieving them. Of Mohammed also, the founder of Mohammedanism, marvelous feats are related. That he once upon a time made a journey on his steed through the air to Jerusalem and back is not the greatest of his deeds. He once cut the moon in two pieces, made the one half slide through his coat sleeve and then

reunited it with the other half. As we see the moon whole, he must have done so! It is said that he once commanded a mountain to come to him, but it didn't, and so he went to the mountain! Enough of such nonsense. Do we find anything similar in the Bible? Nothing of the kind. Chaste description, sober narrative the Bible abounds in, but we find no allusion to such meaningless occurrences.

The christians of succeeding centuries were not always so rational. We find the desire for the miraculous rife already in the apokryphal gospels. At the time of his temptation the Devil is said in one of them to have taken Christ by a hair of his head through the air to Jerusalem. Another apokryphal narrative has it, that when a child in Egypt Christ formed while playing images from clay and then transformed them into men. Catholic legends have ever known wonderful things to say of saints, things often devoid of sense and any clear purpose—as when a dead saint is said to have promenaded away with his own head under his arm. Pilgrimages are undertaken even now to spots where at a particular time the Virgin Mary or some other saint is to have appeared, and even the remnant of some garment or a garment whole or some other relic of a saint is believed to possess miraculous power. Lourdes in France is a much frequented place of pilgrimage, because there once upon a time Mary the “mother of God” appeared at a spring which since then possesses miraculous properties. Even now reports are

current of cures effected. A garment of Christ is kept at Treves in Germany and is exhibited once in a number of years, when pilgrims by the thousand go there and many sick are healed, it is said. More marvelous than the reported miracles themselves is the fact that the same garment is also to be found at other places and that other relics of Christ and a number of saints can be found, said to be identically the same, in other places several times, a few even a dozen times over. The ignorant multitude either does not know this or does not stop to think whether a saint could have had, for example, more than one right arm. All such tales are worse than worthless and have nothing in common with the simplicity of the gospels and other biblical narratives.

True, also in the Bible great miracles are narrated and a great ado has been made concerning not a few. Of course everything can be criticised, and if one wants to throw he generally can find a stone after a while. But the difference between biblical miracles and those of pagan and other legends is great. Here we find things overdrawn and the miraculous so multiplied and emphasized beyond all proportion, that such miracles overshadow everything. They are to prove and reveal divine power, it is true, but there is altogether too much longing after the phenomenal and extraordinary, as our Lord said unto that nobleman of Capernaum: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

Still belief in miracles is a sign of religiousness. Men of all climes and peoples have taken miracles for granted because of a belief in wisdom and power more than human. Some say that belief in a god or gods was engendered by violent disturbances in nature, such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions or terrible cyclones and the like. The fear caused by such occurrences was by nature peoples transferred to higher beings and thus belief in deity or divine powers was caused by fear. But that is putting the cart before the horse. Even ignorant people have within them the idea of cause and effect. Natural phenomena like those referred to seemed to them the manifestations of some mysterious power or powers, the workings of which they found also in their own hearts. If there had been nothing responsive to deity within them, they would not have thought of attributing such external manifestations to a higher, a divine power. Thus we should expect to find it from the very lowest to the very highest.

We live in an age of reason. Entirely too much stress is put upon the intellectual and a part of our nature is not infrequently permitted to lie dormant. Many today will not have anything to do with the miraculous. Whatever to any degree has the appearance of the supersensuous and supernatural is impossible in their eyes and ridiculous. Whatever is clear and admits of easy explanation is the true and real, and what is mysterious and wonderful, is to that extent, unreal and untrue. They are, in-

deed, found on the standpoint of those Greeks who affirmed that man is the measure of all things, and that what his reason cannot comprehend, cannot be true. A very dangerous standpoint and nonsensical at that. The knowable would then be found only within a narrow compass, and that realty should not extend beyond is a foolhardy assertion and in fact believed by no one. Such men are apt to extend the line of their doubt and may finally land in the castle of doubt as did Pilate (and many of his age) who skeptically retorts: "What is truth?"

SECOND CHAPTER.

Miracles and Science.

We live in the age of science, especially of natural science and we emphasize the real, the actual. No use speculating about things or setting up airy phantoms of our own, when we can see, hear and handle so much of the world. The natural sciences take things as they are, measure and weigh them, tell us what they are composed of, what elements constitute matter, how one form of matter and force is transformed into another form, and how naturally everything takes place before our very eyes, so that we cannot well be deceived but stand upon the firm rock of reality. How can such an age believe in miracles! Many still do, but are they not far behind the times, ultraconservatives who glory in the past instead of exalting the present and standing within it with both feet? Miracles cannot be attested, there are no trustworthy witnesses present to hand in their evidence and substantiate them. We will not now question this assertion; it may be true in regard to many alleged miracles. But are the natural sciences so firmly established, that whatever they teach is to be taken for granted and will stand the test of time?

Some doctrines of natural science have become less certain than they once were. Only a few years

ago, it was held as a matter of course that of all the planets of our solar system our earth alone was and could be inhabited. Now Lowell and other naturalists (astronomers) point to Mars as undoubtedly inhabited by beings like we are, rather, if anything, more intellectual and farther advanced in culture, at least in the facility with which they have subdued natural forces and made them subservient to their will. No oceans and other great bodies of water there and the inhabitants have succeeded in perfecting a great canal system which supplies them with an abundance of good water. Now does even the mightiest telescope enlarge the planet sufficiently to render such assertions conclusive and certain? Might not other explanations be given for the phenomena observed? Certainly! And such other explanations have already been given. After all, the theory put forth is a mere speculation, a mere hypothesis; it may be so and it may not be so, and no one will ever be able to state the exact truth about Mars or any other planet with absolute certainty.

Airy speculations after all. It is said concerning Socrates of old that he brought philosophy down from the heavens to the earth, and today science mostly concerns itself about the earth. But even here its theories have varied, and what for years seemed beyond peradventure is now considered false to a great extent. The Kant-Laplace theory, that from an original nebulous mass the visible universe was

evolved, is no longer universally accepted, though as yet nothing better has been put in its place. Certain ascertained facts flatly contradict it, at least seemingly. Some men are calling in question even the accepted theory of light and others seem to have some reason for doubting that gravitation as we know it extends throughout entire space. For many years Darwinism was accepted by most naturalists and believed to explain the evolution of plant and animal life; but long ago the tide has changed and now it is considered capable of explaining only a very few phenomena and is not corroborated by sufficient proof. So things change even in the domain of natural science, and its theories and assertions and so-called findings are not nearly as certain as some people think.

The science of history also puts in its demurrer against miracles, or rather some historians and critics do. As theologians and philosophers of the Hegelian school sixty and more years ago have emphasized development, so others now emphasize evolution still more, and they seem to know exactly what at a certain time was possible and what not, what actually occurred and what did not occur. With them belief in miracles evinces a backward and infantile state of society. With children everything beyond what they understand is extraordinary and miraculous. The times of Christ, they say, belong in the same category. The extraordinary and miraculous, therefore, everywhere abounded, as the al-

leged miraculous occurrences narrated in the New Testament prove, and those related in the Old Testament are still easier of explanation from the same standpoint. So these "profound thinkers" assert and, of course, expect others to fall in line and approve.

But the age of Christ was also an age of doubt. Pilate was not the only man who had lost all confidence in religion and the theories of philosophy; many others like him would ask skeptically "What is truth?" And if most of the earliest Christians were not of this kind, were of the so-called lower strata of society and had taken no part in the intellectual questionings of the age, there were, after all, men like Paul and Apollo and others who were intellectual giants and, nevertheless, accepted Christianity with its miracles. And there were writers in those days and after who deride Christianity and make light also of its miracles; but not in the sense of denying the veracity of what was narrated, but rather from the standpoint of their view of the world. So Celsus (about 150 A. D.) and Lucian. Miracles seemed to these men impossible, just as they do to a great many in our day. But why do the latter deny them? Have they found proof of their non-occurrence? Not at all. They deny them simply because they consider miracles impossible, the occurrence of such would run counter to their preconceived notion. And because they hold them to be impossible, they must, of course, expunge such

narratives and parts of narratives from the text. It would not seem a very straightforward thing to do, to tell Matthew and Mark and Luke and John that what they narrate of this sort is not true, that according to theories of their own and certain other men miracles have not occurred, because, according to present day philosophy, miracles could not come to pass. But these critics are very wise and know much better than contemporaries and eye-witnesses what took place in those faraway times, much better than did the apostles and evangelists themselves!

The idea is widely current at the present day that only ignorant people and men of little culture are still firm believers in the Bible and its miracles. They seem to hold that no man of parts, no naturalist, no philosopher, no critic, no first class historian and statesman believes in revelation and attendant miracles. What men say nowadays concerning events of long ago is really immaterial, their affirming or denying them does not render such events more certain or less certain. Facts of the present day may be inexplicable without such events having taken place. At some future time a wiseacre may scoff at Washington and his little army having accomplished the deeds alleged, may even pretend that he never existed, and that what is said about him is legendary and without foundation. But that would be foolhardiness. The facts of today and the facts and conditions of such future time are proof sufficient of a beginning of this nation as told in

history and of the life and the influence of such a man as Washington. So the history of Christianity and its influence in the world and present day conditions are proof sufficient of wonderful beginnings and of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, its founder, say men of note.

An impression has gone abroad that most naturalists are skeptics and infidels. Nothing could be more erroneous. It has been found that of 262 natural scientists only 20 were indifferent and unbelievers; in other words, 92 per cent were believers and of these about one-half strictly observing their duties as Christians belonging to a particular church.

That most and the greatest naturalists should be believers in a Creator and an overruling Providence is not at all marvelous. Do they not daily contemplate and come in contact with the great works of nature? Science has widened our horizon and makes the world seem much greater than ever before. The world cannot be infinite in space and time, and still it does seem infinite in space at least, when we know of fixed stars, mighty suns very greatly superior in size to our sun so far away that though light travels with such enormous speed, it does not reach us from there until after thousands of years. But that the world of space should be infinite is not thinkable, and still there must be something infinite, which had no beginning; for finite things cannot begin to be of themselves. This would involve the

contradiction that something finite was before it was. But infinite being is and does not begin to be, and all finite things presuppose such infinite being. On every hand the naturalist meets with things, facts and conditions which he cannot explain, which remain for him shrouded in mystery. Only a few years ago atoms were considered the smallest particles of matter, so small that no unaided human eye can detect them. But now naturalists speak of ions and electrons reported to be 2,000 and more times smaller than atoms. Who will ever be able to handle these? !! But they are said to be existing in order to explain things we can see and handle. And these wee little atoms and ions and electrons must, in order to be of use, possess the most extraordinary properties imaginable. They are the centers of forces of the most diverse kind. These forces impel them to combine into larger wholes, so that they may be said to become master mechanics and even world builders, since all things we see are made of them. What could be more wonderful? Men who stop here, like Haeckel, deify these little invisible things and attribute to them infinite wisdom and power. Why do they do this? To get rid of the necessity of believing in a God of infinite wisdom and power. Such a God might also be holy and righteous, and they would rather not be accountable to such a God. But do they not in so doing, compel their intellect to stop thinking? These wee little bits of matter and centers of material forces cannot

be the ultimate reality, they cannot account for their own existence and for the peculiar properties with which they are endowed. Everybody can see that they lead only a derived existence. Thus the "infinitely" small speaks of a Creator, as do also the tiny little animals, infusoria, living in a single drop of water, so small that only the microscope can detect them and still every one with its own peculiar organization.

And then the marvels of the air and of the earth and of the rocks and of the elements! Years ago, only about 20 years ago, who would have deemed it possible that certain rays of light, invisible themselves to our eyes, could penetrate through dark substances such as wood and bones and could thus make the interior of bodies and our very skeleton visible? And still such rays were discovered and the X or Roentgen-Rays have occasioned great surprises. More wonderful still, if possible, is the metal radium, a tiny bit of which not larger than a small pea or even the head of a pin, is seen to be a center of light and heat of so extraordinary a character that we might justly call it a miracle in itself. Such a tiny bit emits a large amount of light and heat without becoming less or exhausting itself in the least. What a being of infinite energy there must exist in order to explain such phenomena!

Such phenomena point to an infinite source of life and energy in nature. This is self-evident; no one

would seem to oppose such idea. Goethe speaks of this in his often quoted lines:

“What, God would **outwardly** alone control,
And on His finger whirl the mighty whole?
He loves the **inner** world to move, to view
Nature in Him, Himself in nature, too,
So that what in Him works, and is and lives,
The measure of His strength, His spirit gives.”

But the energy in nature, after all, though infinite it seem, must be finite. For it is bound up with the finite. Infinite it can be only in case it stands in connection with a limitless supply, with an infinite storehouse of energy in which all the possibilities of the world yet to be were always present.

If a miracle is something we cannot explain, something mystical, something far above human power and human wisdom, then certainly we live in a world of miracles. The beginning of things itself, creation was a stupendous miracle. Bettex says: “We finite beings float in a world of infinitude, and infinitude is a miracle, for an infinite being cannot be comprehended by thought. While in such infinitude our entire existence is built upon miracles. The life of man, being a combination of and inter-relation between matter and spirit, is a miracle, for nobody can explain such interdependence of mind and body; eating and drinking a miracle, for no one can explain how the piece of bread I ate this morning has become a part of my flesh and blood and now in my

brain feels pain I may experience, and thinks and wills.”

Charles Kingsley says: “We cannot understand how the grass at our feet grows, how the egg becomes a bird, how the butterfly can be the same creature which, in the fall previous, was a crawling caterpillar. We cannot understand how an atom of diet in our body becomes transformed into a drop of blood, and how this mortal life depends upon this very blood. Indeed we do not even know what this life is, nor what our soul is and not even what our body is.”

Some people seem to think that only that is real which they can understand. In that case the circle of reality is very small indeed, for even the greatest minds understand very little. You know that you are the same person you were at five, ten, fifteen, twenty, and thirty years of age, and still all the while your body and the particles of matter of which it consists have been continually changing; you have had at least seven new bodies, perhaps, more, and still no one could convince you that you are not the same individual as that boy of your name who listened attentively to a story told by his father or mother. You do not doubt this in the least, but can you explain it? No! Can any naturalist or philosopher or greatest thinker explain it? No! Does such incapability of explaining it shake in the least your confidence in the truth of the assertion that you are the same individual? No! Why then should

you or I disbelieve a miracle of the Bible because we cannot understand it?

The beginning of life is a mystery. No one can explain it. But it is a reality, nevertheless. Naturalists like Haeckel hold that life came of itself, "spontaneous generation" this is called. But they must confess that there is not a vestige of proof for this assertion,—in fact that all investigation and experiments until now proves the contrary. All life demands previous life for its explanation. But whence the first life upon the earth? Dr. Rudolph Otto says: "It is illusory to suppose that it is a natural assumption to derive the living from lower processes in nature. The non-living and the inorganic are also underivable as to their individual stages, and the leap from the inorganic to the organic is simply much greater than from attraction in general to chemical affinity. As a matter of fact the first occurrence-undoubtedly controlled and conditioned by internal necessity—of crystallization, of life or of sensation has just the same marvelousness as everything individual and everything new in any ascending series of nature. In short, every new beginning has the same marvel."

Seeing and hearing are likewise miraculous, we may well say. How finely organized the ear drum must be to report the faintest sound, and more marvelous still is the fact that thereby nerves are set in motion, that they convey the impressions received to the brain and that those impressions are trans-

formed into the actual hearing of the original sounds, of the thunders of a Niagara, or the whisper of the passing breeze, or the melodious harmonies of a grand musical creation.

The eye is wonderfully constructed. No instrument of a photographer, no telescope or microscope is comparable to it in workmanship. Wonderful, indeed, that images of things seen are imprinted upon the retina, that these images are conveyed to the brain and that here we see such images as the very things of nature around us. So we believe, and the sense of touch corroborates our impression. And what a world of beauty we often behold! Scenes may change in rapid succession, our eyes can keep pace with them. It is wonderful how many things we can see in a single day, and every time the eye sees a thing the intricate process necessary is repeated in an instant, and every time a veritable miracle comes to pass.

More marvelous still, if possible, is the fact that we can retain all these impressions of sight and hearing for hours and days and years. Thus, we are not always conscious of their presence, we seem to have forgotten; but if we hear or see anything similar to what we may have seen or heard years ago, and which we had "forgotten," all at once the original impression arises before our mental vision; sometimes wonderfully clear and vivid. It is the world of memory we are peeping into. Every act of it a miracle. No one ever has, can or ever will be

able to explain it, not even a single act or reminiscence of memory. It is and ever will be shrouded in mystery. Not an hour of our lives passes but what miracles of sight or hearing or memory take place, we have become so used to them that they appear entirely natural and do not strike us as at all marvelous; and still they remain veritable miracles, inexplicable natural occurrences. Why then should the miraculous appear so odd in the realm of revelation?

A thinker has recently said: "If flames should break forth from yon tree, if yon hill should open and a spring of water well up from the depth, then many would cry out: 'An evidence of the nearness of God! High time to think of our soul's salvation, perhaps the end of the world is at hand!' And all the while these many people might remain blind to the greater evidence of God's nearness which exists in the fact that millions of men all around them in the world see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and that these remember what they have seen and heard, no one and only God alone knows how."

Benjamin Franklin can hardly be styled a naturalist, though it is said of him that he brought down lightning from heaven and rendered it harmless. The inscription upon his tombstone reads thus: "Here lies the body of the printer Benjamin Franklin, a food for worms like unto the cover of an old book, the contents of which have been torn out and robbed of its writing and golden lettering. But it

will, as he has believed, reappear anew in another and more beautiful edition, amended and perfected by its Author." Franklin here undoubtedly points to the resurrection, the greatest of miracles, in which he, consequently, believed with all his heart.

Copernicus (died 1543) is the founder of the world-theory named after him and which makes the sun the center of our planetary world (other suns of their systems) and the earth and the other planets revolving around it. He might have been proud of his discovery, but the inscription on his tombstone is a testimony of his pious humility. He says: "Who in contemplating the wonderful order and harmony of the universe, bespeaking the wisdom and power of its Author, should not be led to the adoration of His omnipresent workmanship?"

John Kepler, the discoverer of those three great laws of planetary revolution, was likewise a devout Christian and could not comprehend, he says, how a naturalist could be blind to tokens of divine wisdom and power in nature. He says: "Great is the Lord and great His power, and of His wisdom there is no end. Praise Him ye suns, moons and planets, in whatsoever language your adoration may sound forth, praise Him all ye harmonies of heaven! Ye also, ye witnesses of His truth!" Newton was a no less devout Christian. He once said: "The wonderful arrangement of the sun, planets and comets could proceed only from the counsels and the government of an alwise and almighty being." It is

well known that he was wont to lift his hat whenever the name of God was spoken.

J. von Liebig was a master in the domain of chemistry and is renowned for his inventions and benevolent undertakings. His meat extract is, perhaps, most widely known. He says: "The real knowledge of nature leads to adoration of the Creator." Chemistry might find and describe the materials of things, but it was not the multiplicity of substances which counts, but their marvelous arrangement and ordering, and these were God's secret.

Shall I relate what great poets and men of letters have said concerning the Bible, the book of miracles? Space would fail me. When Walter Scott upon his death bed asked that passages be read to him out of the book, his son-in-law inquired: "From what book?" Scott answered: "How can you ask, there is but one book, the Bible!" But Scott was an omniverous reader and had more than once read the Bible through with all its narratives of miracle working.

Goethe and Schiller, too, were filled with ideas and the very language of the Bible. The former's greatest drama, *Faust*, is filled with biblical thoughts and allusions. He once said that however great might be the progress of culture in the future, it would never surpass the moral culture of Christianity shining forth in all its grandeur in the gospels. "I am convinced that the Bible becomes the more beautiful the better one understands it."

Philosophers and statesmen, who generally are thinkers of a high order, have sounded the praises of the Bible. One of the greatest thinkers of all time, Kant, says in a letter to a friend: "It is well that you seek for rest and peace in the gospel, since it is an inexhaustible spring of all truth, truth, indeed, to be found nowhere else after reason has traversed its own entire domain."

Max Mueller of Oxford had gone through many of the religious books, we may well say the Bibles of the east, volume after volume. He holds that not one of them can in the least compare with the Bible.

Napoleon on the Island of St. Helena had time to read and think. There he once said: "The gospel is not what you can call a book, it is a living being with a power and energy in it overawing everything opposed to it. I do not tire reading it day by day and always with the same relish.—The soul enraptured by the beauty of the gospel no longer belongs to itself; God takes possession of it and guides its thoughts and capabilities; it is His."

Gladstone is the author of the words: "How can we bring the gospel into the hearts of the people? This is the one great question of today and of every day. There is really only this one. I have been connected for forty years with the government of Great Britain and have become acquainted with the greatest geniuses of our times, sixty of them. Fifty-five of these were believing men from conviction, and five others thought highly of religion. My own

faith becomes stronger and more lively the older I grow.”

Bismarck also was a Christian from conviction. Once he said: “If I were not a Christian, I should not serve my king and my country another hour. If I did not count on God and was willing to obey Him, I should not care for the potentates of earth. I know not from whence to take my feeling of duty, if not from God. Bereave me of my faith and you bereave me of my country. If I were not a pious Christian and did not possess the marvelous basis of religion, you would never have come to the possession of such a chancellor.” And again: “Now in old age I am content if I can find out, whereunto God would lead and then to limp after Him.”

All these men believed in the verities of religion and the miracles of the Bible did in no way shake their faith. They would one and all subscribe to the following words of Bettex: “Is it not a miracle for the will of man to move about in perfect freedom in this material world? A miracle when I direct my hand to take hold of a stone and cast it into the air, the law of gravitation compelling it all the while to move downward, and my will power overcoming such law? And is it not a miracle, when at every moment of time upon earth new life springs forth from life preceding? Concerning the underlying final causes of such miracles natural science knows no more than the swallow which by reason of instinct builds her nest and takes care of her young.

We are wandering between towering walls of miracles. Time and eternity, space and infinitude, birth and death, freedom and heredity, necessity and chance! Who will solve these mysteries? Whence comes life? Whence conscious life, whence new and self-sustaining life? Whence the forces operating upon and at work in the world? How can the spiritual influence the material, how can mind work upon and influence the body, my mind and will work upon and direct my hand? Who knows, who will explain it?"

THIRD CHAPTER.

Objections Raised Against Miracles.

There are many and we cannot go into minute details. But they may be arranged under a few heads:

1. Miracles are said to be impossible because opposed to natural law.

Are miracles impossible? A queer question. Why not rather inquire as to their actual occurrence at some time or other? No use disputing about their possibility, if it can be proven that one or more have actually taken place. No less a man than John Stuart Mill, agnostic though he was, has said: "The question concerning miracles is not a philosophical but a purely historical one. They are to be considered actual facts as soon as on trustworthy evidence it can be proven that they have really come to pass." This would seem to be the only common-sense view of the matter. No one would think of arguing whether or not gold can be found in California or in South Africa, after hundreds of millions of dollars worth have been mined in either place. Thousands, yea millions upon millions during the last 1900 years have affirmed their belief in miracles performed by Christ and his apostles, among other things upon the evidence of what he has been and is to them and their spiritual well-being, which except

for the miracle of his resurrection would be entirely inexplicable. The evangelists and apostles themselves have narrated such miracles and as eye-witnesses or on the assertion of eye-witnesses have believed in their actual occurrence. The true method of procedure would be, it seems, therefore, to inquire into the trustworthiness of their reports and thus to find out, whether the miracles narrated by them are real facts of history or not.

All the more would this seem to be the case because of the great esteem in which reality is held. Facts, happenings, occurrences, events are what men are after nowadays, not fine spun theories, airy speculations and dogmas. Do we not live in the age of the natural sciences? Are not matter and its forms measured, weighed, the proportions of its various elements computed, and is not thus reality seen, heard and handled? Of what value is a theory resting on shadowy phantoms of the air and not on facts of experience ascertained as real by the testimony of the senses? A theory may be put forth as a kind of surmise, a feeler, indicating a line along which investigation may proceed; if facts are then found to substantiate it, **well and good**. It need then no longer be considered an airy hypothesis, but an established doctrine. But if facts are looked for in vain and the hypothesis put forth remains suspended in the air with nothing underneath to rest upon, why then it must be given up as a mere phantasm. This for the most part is the case with

Darwinism. On the strength of some supposed evidence the hypothesis was broached, but the facts looked for to substantiate it were not discovered, or those that were testified rather to the contrary. The struggle for existence, the survival of the fittest, natural selection may account for the extinction of some forms and for the modification of others, but cannot account for variations and much less for the formation of a new species. Indeed there must be considerable variation before natural selection can come into play at all. Naturalists have, therefore, with but few exceptions turned away from Darwinism. Two or three decades ago it reigned supreme and to deny it or even argue against it seemed foolhardiness; but since then it has been found wanting, because facts searched for to establish it as reliable were not discovered. Some naturalists are still clinging to it in the hope of finding veritable proofs to support it. But if the search during forty years or more was in vain, it is not likely that future search will be more successful, so that these men are certainly doomed to disappointment.

That miracles are impossible is an hypothesis pure and simple. Nevertheless, not a few well known men of the present day cling to it most tenaciously. They act as though it were no longer an hypothesis, but an established truth. They profess to be conscientious investigators who desire to write history in the light of data unearthed and ascertained. But

what is their attitude in regard to the documents of earliest Christianity? Whatever in the gospels suits their fancy they accept as veritable truth. but whenever a miracle is narrated, they find that either the text is corrupt, or that such narratives are a later addition or at least a later embellishment of an original occurrence of, perhaps, more than common importance. At any rate they succeed in eliminating the miraculous element. Why do they, to accomplish this, exert themselves so greatly and expend so much intellectual force? Because, so it seems, with them it is a commonplace, indeed almost an axiom that miracles are impossible and thus they exert themselves with might and main to free the gospel narratives and other documents of earliest Christianity of every trace of the miraculous.

And on what do they base their assumption of the supposed impossibility of miracles? Upon their belief that natural law is inviolable, cannot be broken. A miracle, they say, is an infringement or interruption or disruption, a tearing asunder of natural law; but every natural law is, they assert, unalterably fixed and cannot even for an instant cease acting; now, therefore, a miracle is impossible.

Two things are in their calculations taken for granted, which seem very questionable indeed. One is that natural law is by them considered an existence apart, as a thing by itself, which as a kind of measure of reality must ever remain intact; and the other is that a miracle renders such law, for the time

being, inoperative, suspends it, renders it of no effect.

But is this the true conception of natural law and is that the true definition of a miracle? If such is the case, we might as well throw up arms and grant that their contention is valid. But is such the case?

When we call an occurrence a miracle we mean that it is an event by itself, that it has not come to pass in the natural course of events, that it transcends human wisdom and power. We see in it the manifestations of a power more than human. If Jesus really by the word of his power opened the eyes of a blind man, or after the same method enabled the bed-ridden man crippled by rheumatism or palsy, in a moment's time, to arise and walk, he accomplished something which the best physician in the world by means of the highest medical skill of the present day could not bring about. But possibly the latter might effect a cure in the course of weeks or months by applying his remedies and his skill. In either case the forces which make for health were set free and put in operation, while what hindered life and engendered disease was eliminated; in the former case, however, it was done by direct application of power, in the latter by means of medical skill. Why then should by Christ's method an infringement of natural law have taken place any the more than that of the physician? It was simply an accelerated cure by means of superhuman power. We might thus style a miracle a natural event

viewed from the divine side. Many a sick person would not recover on the strength of the natural means employed; recovery in such cases is by the believing Christian ascribed to divine blessing and interposition, a veritable miracle if the true facts were known and the forces of recovery stood forth in their full objective reality. But who in this case, as in the one preceding, would speak of a disruption of natural law? Such a case is, of course, not accounted a miracle, because the process is slow and nothing extraordinary is observed. But when Jesus says to that leper (Matth. 8: 1-4): "Be thou clean!" and his leprosy forthwith leaves him, we at once call it a miracle; no human power could have effected such an instantaneous change. A slower mode of procedure would in this case not have effaced the miraculous nature of the cure for the reason that leprosy has ever been and is today an incurable disease. The marvelous progress of the science of medicine up to the present has been of no avail against the ravages of leprosy, and any man who in our day should succeed, though it take months or years, in healing a leper, would be considered a miracle worker. The true meaning of such a cure would be: The healer succeeded in setting free and increasingly strengthening the forces of life to such a degree, that the disease became powerless as time passed on and finally had to give way altogether. Now the instantaneous cure wrought by our Lord, as mentioned above was effected on the same principle, only that

the power of life imparted was so great as at once to put a stop to the ravages of the disease and to make new and healthy flesh take the place of the old and corrupt. One might say: That was contrary to law, for natural law does not operate so quickly. But this would be to admit that the speed with which the cure was effected is the only thing which could be put forth as a valid objection on the score of natural law. And would this objection be of any weight for him who believes in an almighty God as the creator and preserver of the universe?

The trouble with those who deny the possibility of miracles is this: They have a wrong idea of natural law. They look at it as something above nature to which the workings and development of the latter must conform. Natural law is with them a dogma of their own creation which must in no way be molested. To hear them talk of individual and eternal laws, one might suppose that these laws had a separate existence by themselves, that they were deities who held inexorable sway over their distinct and individual departments of nature. And these men profess to be **modern** and extol in unmeasured terms induction as the only true method of scientific research! These laws they dream of may be the result of their speculation and do credit to their philosophical insight, but they have not been found out by paying attention to reality. How dare such men, despite their renown, call themselves **modern**? Their speculations would do credit to medieval

schoolmen and scholastics. The simple Christian who believes in the miracles of the New Testament, because they are reported by eye-witnesses, is decidedly more modern than the naturalists and theologians referred to.

Do we not rather discover natural laws by observing the ongoing of events and the development of things in nature? Was it not the very natural thing of the falling of an apple which aroused in Newton's fertile brain a succession of thoughts leading to the discovery of the law of gravitation? Not by airy speculation but by actual contact with nature, by listening to its secrets, by observation and experiment, in a word, by scientific experience we arrive at what may be styled natural laws. As another has said: Natural laws are simply descriptions of our scientific experience. Now suppose we have made mistakes in our observations and experiments, suppose our scientific experience did not measure up fully to the true state of affairs and was not a transcript of reality; why, then, the "natural law" deduced was faulty from the start or, perhaps, altogether wrong. Certainly such a law could not be styled inviolable. It would have to be discarded and another put in its place which truly represented the workings of nature. Accordingly natural laws are not necessarily constant and unalterable, but are subject to revision and improvement in case our observation and experiments were faulty, and will be the more exact and adequate the more fully we

succeed in finding out and describing accurately nature's methods.

For many centuries it was considered natural law and in accordance therewith that the sun revolved around the earth, until Copernicus proved the reverse to be true. A text book in jurisprudence less than one and a half centuries ago stated that a contract became void and of no effect, if the promise of one of the parties involved an impossibility, e. g., if one should obligate himself to make a voyage through the air. Such a voyage was at that time considered impossible and contrary to law. But before another edition of the book was issued, a voyage through the air had become possible by the invention of a balloon, and it was now stated that the example given in the preceding edition no longer held good. But how now? Men in a number of countries are vying with each other in the construction of the best air ship, and certainly he who best succeeds in making use of natural law, or in some way of overcoming it for the purpose will be the winner. At the time of the Second Hague Peace Conference several air ships of large dimensions had already reached such a high state of perfection that said Conference took under advisement the question, and devoted a lengthy deliberation to it, whether the powers represented should not prohibit the throwing of destructive missiles from such ships, as it seemed increasingly likely that such a thing might become possible in the near future. And since

then what strides air ship construction has taken! The aeroplane has been brought forth in the forms of the biplane and the monoplane, etc., and great has been its achievements. Hoxie has ascended two miles and over. Others, both in this and other countries, have carried one or two or even three passengers with considerable security and the speed attained was remarkable. It is questionable, indeed, whether the ability to reach such high altitudes is of any permanent value. It would seem that the dangers attending such sudden and great atmospheric changes are very considerable and outweigh any possible advantage; but the aeroplane at lower altitudes may yet fulfill an important mission. Still airships of the rigid and half rigid and dirigible style would seem to carry the future. An air ship used for regular passenger service, carrying twenty or thirty and even more persons on its trips, and being able to accomplish this with hardly any more danger to life and limb than in an ocean steamer, is certainly a marvel of achievement and would seem to imply still greater possibilities for the future. The meaning of it all can hardly be overdrawn. Man is mastering the air as a means of transportation by bringing under his sway its laws and forcing them to do his bidding.

These and other instances show that so-called natural law is not a fixed quantity. What once was considered a natural law has upon further research been found wanting or what was once styled a mir-

acle and thought to be contrary to natural law is now seen to be quite in accordance therewith and thus loses, in the eyes of our antagonists, its miraculous aspects. A tourist once upon a time told negroes in Central Africa, that in Europe water in winter became so compact and hard that people could drive over with horses and heavily laden wagons. His hearers could not believe such a thing possible and laughed derisively in the belief that he was trying to impose upon them. They had never observed such a change, water had in their country always retained its liquid form. To become ice seemed contrary to the natural course of things, contrary to nature's law, a miracle, an impossible thing. Just like some wise philosophers of today will not believe in a miracle, because they have never observed one. Will they then believe only what they have actually observed personally? How if pupils at school and students at college should want to follow the same principle exclusively and not think it worth while to learn of things which they never had seen themselves and never expected to? Adhering to such principle would make the science of history impossible and would really blot out the past. Each generation would have to begin anew to learn what it could see, hear, touch and handle. To state it is to become aware of its tremendous folly. Nobody would think of applying such a principle to history and to the sciences. Why any more to the things mentioned and the events related in the

Bible, especially in the New Testament? Many miracles of the New Testament, including the resurrection of Christ, are supported by fully as good evidence as are many of history which they would not think of doubting, and still they will not believe in the occurrence of such miracles, simply because that would be contrary to the supposed inviolability of natural law. We stand for fact and reality, they stand for the majesty of "natural law," though the latter flatly contradict fact and reality. True modern men call for facts, these with them are the measure of the theories and the latter must be shaped accordingly. But our wise philosophers and philosophizing naturalists uphold their theory and worship a dogma of their own make, though it contradict facts. Facts rather, so they decree, must conform to their preconceived notions and must be so worked up and shaped as to be in harmony with them. And they command that modern men calmly submit and confide in such medieval nonsense!

L. von Gerdell is right in saying: "Modern men, become more modern! Give up your cowardly flight before God! Cast to the winds your fear of the granite-like reality of the living God in history! In doing so you will find solved in Christ the most urgent and difficult problems of today and will discover also for the future an harmonious and satisfying conception of the world."

Among naturalists, perhaps, Haeckel is the best

illustration of the deification of natural law. Already in his "History of Creation" he proclaimed the universal prevalence and supremacy of his so-called biogenetic law, according to which the pre-natal development is to be a kind of recapitulation of foregoing stages of development in the animal kingdom. Consequently the human embryo at different stages is to look like a number of man's animalic progenitors. To prove his theory Haeckel photographed the pre-natal development at various stages and pretended to have found the human embryo at earlier and later stages of development almost identical in appearance with that of certain animals, e. g., the monkey. Indeed the pictures presented can hardly be distinguished from one another. But Haeckel had doctored the negatives and his pictures are a distortion of the truth. This was demonstrated by other naturalists and Haeckel after a fashion acknowledged it. Publicly, however, he never retracted or corrected himself, perhaps for the reason that he still hopes some day to make good his assertion and to prove his hypothesis a law. But his hypothesis has been clearly disproven by a number of noted naturalists. They are in a much better position to know than Haeckel was thirty years ago. No new evidence has been discovered to corroborate his hypothesis. Nevertheless, he clings to it as though it were a verified truth. Haeckel thus deifies a law of his own creation, which has no ground to rest upon. How credulous and nonsen-

sical! He wants to be regarded as an apostle and high priest of science and sneers at those as credulous who believe in the well attested miracles of Christianity! Would they not rather be justified in sneering at him? In his "Riddle of the Universe" ("Weltraetsel") he has shown himself to be such an ignoramus in things of theology and philosophy that only stupid pride can have induced him to venture upon these fields of research, and even in his own domain of natural science he is no longer taken serious on account of his brazen faced distortion of the truth.

Many things happen in natural science "which ye have not dreamed of in your philosophy." There are e. g., the Roentgen or X rays. These somewhat upset our ideas of natural law. These rays have made possible what formerly would have seemed highly miraculous. The discovery of radium divulged still other secrets of nature. The character of this element, if indeed it is one, is marvelous in the extreme. It can emit light and heat without any apparent loss to itself. It seems to be an inexhaustible reservoir of energy. Some of its manifestations have given rise to momentous inferences. The phenomena exhibited by radium and other elements are believed by some to point to the convertibility of all material energy into light, magnetism and electricity, and finally into ether. But ether is without form and weight, it fills space and pervades everything, and still cannot be seen or handled. The law

of the conservation of matter and energy is thus believed to be endangered. If so, it would be another instance of the instability of a law believed to be of paramount and absolute value. The inference may not hold good, however. Can the diminution of energy in any perceptible degree be proven, and who knows but what ether itself may not be the reservoir of energy? Such phenomena as those of the X rays and radium would rather seem to point to the fact that underneath the material is the immaterial as the upholding and all-pervading reality. The immaterial resides and worketh in and through the material; it is the real source of energy which supplies everything needed for tangible reality.

Perhaps it is well to ask, whether science is at all competent to decide upon what is possible and what is impossible. A miracle is something which does not follow in the natural course of things, it is caused by superhuman power, or, as was stated above, it is a natural event viewed from the divine side. Another, Jean Paul Richter, has said: "A miracle on earth is nature in heaven." We can see only the natural aspect of it. If Christ should appear and perform a miracle as he once did, or if upon the prayer of faith a sick person given up by physicians should speedily recover, we could behold only the fact of recovery and could by no manner of means perceive or find out the mysterious power which caused it. That such a power, however, had been active, we could not doubt. Some would, per-

haps, refer to the efficacy of the physician's medicine after all, though the sick person had not taken any for days, as the physician had declared it to be useless. Others would say that such recovery was a clear evidence of God's miraculous power. No one could be in doubt that there was or had been some mysterious cause in operation, since effects do not come of themselves and the disease could not have given way and health have been restored without some force bringing it about. Science could only state such to be a fact, but would be unable to say anything whatever about the nature of the power at work. It would certainly be beyond its province to declare, that such recovery was no miracle at all, because miracles were impossible.

Natural events are not always clear as daylight. Science may speak of them as coming to pass according to natural law; but the latter word is often a convenient word only for getting rid of a difficulty. Chemistry may state the formula for the composition of water or air. To the superficial looker on it seems clear enough that two parts of hydrogen and one of oxygen combined produce water. But when he beholds two flames, the one of oxygen and the other of hydrogen, unite and form water, he shakes his head and says it looks incredible. The scientist also must think of some mysterious power behind the phenomenon. The marvel is that minutest particles of matter, invisible even to the microscope, should have predilections for one another, that they

should attract some particles and repel such repugnant to them, and that the product of those uniting should be so entirely unlike any one of the parts composing it. It looks as though these infinitesimal particles possessed intelligence and could choose of their own accord. And still would that not be a monstrous assertion? The air is composed of four elements consisting of such minutest particles and mixed in a very nicely and delicately ballanced manner. If the mixture were a little different, if there were more nitrogen or more carbonic acid gas in it, it would become unfit for breathing and be a source of death instead of life giving power. And if there were more of oxygen in the air, it would at once cause a conflagration, a fire whose flames would envelop the earth. The scientist speaks of finely ballanced natural law superintending the composition of the air. But such composition is simply the result of the workings of a powerful wisdom bringing to pass what it finds good for the creatures which people the earth. The scientist must know that to speak of natural law as producing, it does not state the truth, because law is simply a method of operation, in this case a method according to which the air is composed of elements in due and delicately arranged proportions. But the power making and superintending the arrangement? The scientist may think of such a power, but it is not within his province to speak of it. And it is certainly not within the province of science to declare, that there is no

such power, that we dare not go beyond what we know of the air and its composition. Science is not competent to say that only what we know of the air exists and that anything beyond, any infinitely intelligent and miraculous power is impossible.

Instances might be multiplied to show that natural science frequently finds itself at its wits end in many departments of investigation. The beginning of life is for it an absolute enigma, sensation and consciousness and self-consciousness in man likewise. All such instances point to a mysterious and all-powerful wisdom underlying and causing the manifestations. Whether a scientist or any other man perceives therein the workings of an all-wise God or not depends entirely upon the state of his heart, whether or not he is open to conviction. Dr. Samtleben speaks of this when he says:

“The erroneous opinion is prevalent in many circles, that miracles cannot stand the light of science, since science were competent to declare miracles impossible. Put everything where it belongs. Miracles do not belong upon the scientist’s dissecting table, but they are permitted to remain in the mysterious depths of faith and religious life, the proper field for their manifestation. Who can weigh divine omnipotence and love upon the scales and measure with tape and yard stick the miraculous possibilities of God’s will? The tiny rootlet, upon which the life of the plant depends, searches in the depths underneath for life-giving nourishment,

quietly and unobserved; the heart of man, hidden within, sends the life fluid into every part of his body; but if laid upon the dissecting table and made bare, they at once cease their activity and no longer will reveal the secrets of life. And thus also miracles have their real sources of life in the soul's inmost depths, they cease showing themselves in the gaze of a doubting multitude and call for faith in him who performs them and in him who looks on. Whoever wishes to know a miracle in its true nature must view it with the heart, and with a believing and praying heart at that. Whoever goes at it with the knife and tongs of reason and so-called science, will never be able to find out what it really is.

“This is the reason why such absurd declarations are made as: there are no miracles; miracles are impossible and have never occurred, and their impossibility can be scientifically demonstrated. Now what does such declaration really mean! It means that we know minutely all the forces and possibilities of the universe. It means that during the last 4000 years we have observed every natural phenomenon and have thoroughly investigated it, so that we understand exactly what is possible and what is not possible. And further, from the observations and investigations of so short a time, we are perfectly able to draw legitimate inferences respecting everything which has occurred in the past and which will take place in the future. But would not such pretension be the sheerest nonsense? Science is not and

never will be in a condition to point out with un-failing certainty what is possible and what not. What is science? Learning to know, very gradually, the laws of being which go before and which science with its investigations can follow only very slowly. Being is not dependent on human understanding of it. Before all human science there existed God and His creative activity. And a miracle is not competent to assail it. This were like waging war against the sun with revolver and cannon, thinking the while, when once our weapons are more perfect we shall bring him down! The very essence of a miracle is the fact that arguments of reason cannot touch it, that it cannot be comprehended nor proven. Whoever tries to understand and explain a miracle, shows by his very effort that he does not know, what a miracle really is. What, comprehend and explain the flaming manifestation of divine power upon this dark earth of ours? Impossible! A miracle explained and proven scientifically were a contradiction in itself. You might just as well speak of painting a picture of the infinite God.—God is a miracle, and whoever does not believe in miracles does not believe in God, and he is too weak of mind to comprehend both. A miracle cannot be localized and grasped by one's intellect, as one can grasp something palpable with his hand; you must see it in and with your mind. This is the reason why minds of small compass were inclined to ridicule miracles, since these transcended their small hori-

zon, and that among all peoples men of master minds ever believed in miracles.”

The great strides science has made in our day leads some people to think that by and by all the secrets of nature will be laid bare. A mistaken notion. The more we learn to know of nature, to that very degree its mysteries become greater and more numerous. We shall ever only know in part. Into nature’s inmost secret, no created intellect will ever be able to enter. But whatever be the progress of natural science in the future, it will never be competent to prove that miracles are impossible. To do this it would have to understand all the mysteries of the universe, and then it would see miracles everywhere because it would know something of God and His workings.

Miracles impossible! We have seen how many things were formerly not even thought of. Think of many discoveries and the application of scientific knowledge to the problems of every day life. The steam engine seemed marvelous, but now we have electric motors and an electric train has been run at the speed of 130 miles per hour. We have air ships and wonder what will yet be accomplished in this direction. We have not only the common telegraph and telephone, but such without a wire to support the electric current, and we have also electric photography at a distance, pictures having been taken as much as 60 and even 200 miles away. These are a few examples of what the genius of man has

accomplished. And is this to be the limit? Will not discoveries and inventions continue to be made? May not our children and children's children be permitted to see even greater marvels than we have seen? Who can foretell what human ingenuity may yet bring about? And all this not contrary to law, though it seem so ever so much, but rather by making use of the forces of nature according to methods found out in studying nature. True, often man overrides and countracts methods or laws of nature by making use of other and, we may say, higher laws of nature, as in aerial navigation, or he compels forces of nature to do his bidding in ways he has discovered as the proper ones for his purposes. Is then man greater than God, so that he may use natural forces as he pleases in order to bring about results new and wonderful, while God must stand idly by and dare not or cannot use the forces of His creation to accomplish the purposes of His will? God a weakling tied to the wheels of law's chariot! Only people who believe in no God and who have enthroned man in God's stead could so hold.

Man does override natural law. An often quoted example is hurling a stone into the air. The power of gravity ever draws it back to earth, but it ascends, nevertheless, so long until the arm's force compelling it upward is spent. Is not God's arm more powerful than man's? A river flows along in its natural course, has done so for centuries. In steps man, digs a new bed and turns the onward

rushing waters into it. Really no law is thereby transgressed, rather laws are only turned aside to do their accustomed work in a new way, or rather that by means of them new purposes may be accomplished. Is God less ingenious than man? May He not direct forces of His own making in new ways to bring about new results?

When Christ walked upon the waters of the sea of Galilee he must have overcome the downward stress of gravity, just as the upward soaring stone overcame it by reason of the human force expended. But can you and I tell what power stood at Christ's command? Some years ago, there was not a little said of a newly invented bicycle for riding on water. In that case the power of gravity had to be overcome likewise; in Christ's case of course it was by no mechanical contrivance, but by the sheer force of his will. Is it for you and me to say, how great that force was? Napoleon is credited with saying on one occasion when the Alps were in his way: "There shall be no Alps!" Leading his army across and over them was the exhibition of marvelous will power. Dare you affirm that walking on the face of Lake Galilee was impossible for Christ? !

Transforming water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee was undoubtedly done according to law, only not in the usual way of the slow process of fermentation. In part the elements constituting the wine were present in the water and in part in the surrounding atmosphere. Christ

simply compelled these elements to unite in the water of those jars in the proper proportion, and wine was the result. No human being, it is true, ever did anything similar; but Christ, truly human though he was, was unique in other respects, and may we set a limit to his power?

Turning water into wine was hardly as great a miracle, as multiplying a few loaves of bread to such an extent that 5,000 hungry people were able to appease their hunger. It was an extraordinary achievement, some try to dissolve the miraculous element entirely by saying, that Christ simply set a good example by liberally distributing the provisions his disciples had in store and that then others did likewise, and thus all could at least eat something. But there is not the least indication in the text of any such procedure. His disciples were present as eye-witnesses and they are responsible for the narrative. To explain away the miraculous is saying in so many words, that they invented the story and wilfully told a falsehood. But men who invent falsehoods and try to lead astray hearers and readers, do not act like these disciples did, they always speak highly of themselves and try to make people believe that they are upright and honest. Now Christ's disciples are manifestly not of this kind; they do not hide or smooth over their own faults, rather tell the naked truth about themselves and, consequently, would not think of relating anything about their Master but the truth. Those five

loaves of bread then were wonderfully multiplied in Christ's hands. But does not under God's blessing a bushel of wheat produce twenty-fold, in very fertile soil often a great deal more? In the parable of the sower Christ speaks of thirty, sixty and even an hundred-fold, indicating thereby that such was in Palestine actually the case. What in nature is a rather slow process is in Christ's hands quickly accomplished. Of course various questions might be asked, and we shall have to recur to Christ's super-human power for explanation.

But in a still greater degree this is the case when he brought the dead back into life. Lazarus had been in his grave for days, corruption must have begun. In case of the young man at Nain (Luke 7), there could also be no doubt but what death had done his dreadful work. But at Christ's behest, life comes back to both and at once pervades their being and enables them to set their will power into motion and to move their bodies. A stupendous miracle! But is death to be triumphant in the universe or life? So, even, according to biblical teaching, the resurrection of Lazarus is according to the eternal purposes of the Almighty. Christ overcame the forces which make for corruption and put into quick operation the forces which make for life. But has not Christ asserted that he was perfectly at home in the thought and purposes of God (Matth. 11: 26, 27), and that he was and is life?

2. Another objection raised against miracles is

that they are not sufficiently attested by competent witnesses. Even many witnesses testifying to the best of their ability could not render credible an occurrence so extraordinary as a miracle would be. Renan puts it thus: "Up to now no miracle has been proven. Suppose a man nowadays should pretend to be a miracle worker. What would be done? A commission would be appointed of competent men to find out all about the truth of his assertion. Such a commission would, per chance, exhume a corpse newly put into the grave, would prove that death had actually taken place, would appoint the place where the miracle of restoring life was to be tried and would see to it that conditions were such that the truth could easily be ascertained. A restoration to life under such circumstances would possess a degree of probability bordering on certainty. If the experiment could and should be repeated on other dead persons, then it would follow that supernatural events transpire in the world, and that certain persons are endowed with the power to produce such supernatural events. But who will say that such experiments and such corroboration are possible? Rather the stories about miraculous occurrences have arisen from the innate desire of peoples to encircle the brow of their great men with a halo of glory."

Indeed how ingenious! A miracle to be proven like unto any common event before a judicial tribunal! In other words, nothing takes place but what is

customary and anything extraordinary is to be set aside as unworthy of credence. God must by no manner of means think of reaching down to earth in His wisdom, power and love to startle people by unwonted phenomena. If any such are to happen at all, He must leave them for man to think out and bring about. Renan's objection is on a level with that of Tyndall who said he would believe in the Christian God, if upon the prayer of Christians one-half of the patients of a hospital were restored to health, and the other half, for whom no prayers had been sent to heaven, would succumb to their diseases and die. It is dictating what God is to do and what not, in order that such men of mighty intellect may be able to believe in their own chosen way. Why should God have anything to say about the manner of believing, so as to become the subjects of His good pleasure?! Do not men like Renan know much better than God in what way to arrange the affairs of His spiritual kingdom?! Suppose a man in some corner of the earth would say: "We hear that Goethe and Tennyson can produce fine poems for children. We would like such for our children very much. Let one or both come and show what they can accomplish in this line. We shall give them the subjects we should like to have poems written on, and if what they produce meets our approval, they may count on our patronage. We shall then also know that the reports about their poetic ability is true." Yes, indeed, God should put Him-

self and His power on exhibition for the special benefit of such wily infidels!

3. Another objection is this: Miracles, it is said, no longer occur. Reports of miracles nowadays are untrue and can be disproven. They take place only in the imagination of persons easily imposed upon. There are people who hanker after the miraculous and such generally now and then affirm that they have witnessed miracles. Miracles related of times gone by are of the same sort and the stories about them are not to be credited.

According to this objection events of former times must constantly keep reoccurring, in order to be credible. Suppose that in several centuries, for some reason or other, aerial navigation should fall into disuse and no one had ever seen an airship or heard of a trip through the air on one of them. If one should tell them or they found it related in books or magazines, that so and so long ago men made extended voyages through the air and that even battles had been fought a thousand or two feet high, they might say: "you are trying to impose upon us, such things do not happen now and they, consequently, never did happen." Steam is being replaced by electricity as a propelling power. Suppose that in the course of a century steam will be no longer so used and after a while some one should affirm: steam is not now so used and it never was. In fact this objection really does away with beginnings of every kind. Only things which now occur

have occurred, a change is impossible. And such an objection is raised at a time when evolution, development in some form is so widely held to be true, when things, consequently, are today not quite what they were yesterday, and when a new order of things and events may be expected almost any time.

But is it true that miracles no longer occur? Ask missionaries in heathen lands. A native preacher in India, a man full of zeal and faith, once on his way of duty through a woodland and while resting for a few minutes upon a log was bitten by a poisonous serpent, arose, sent his petition up to God saying: "Almighty God, do not permit this bite to injure me, so that I may be able to reach my appointment and preach the gospel of Christ." And behold in the strength of his faith he went on his way rejoicing and no evil effects followed the venomous sting. This occurrence is well attested. An American missionary who was in Pekin during those days of horror when the beleaguered Christians seemed lost by reason of the Chinese onslaughts related, that only by God's almighty power was it possible that they could have endured the siege and, when relief at last arrived, all with one accord fell on their knees to thank God for His manifest help.

Of course, all this may be ridiculous; he who refuses to believe will always find an excuse for his unbelief. But there are miracles of a different nature which no one can gainsay. **The change in the intellectual and moral condition of heathen peo-**

ples. The Sandwich Islands were once inhabited by cannibals. Hostile tribes slaughtered and ate one another. To slay an enemy and at a feast to devour him was considered great enjoyment. Conditions in the New Hebrides were not much better. But what change the gospel of Christ has wrought! No cannibalism any longer, rather true worship of the living God, a moral culture truly astounding among a people for centuries given over to such cruel and inhuman practices. Would science and learning have effected such a change? Never! You might bring to bear on a heathen people all the enlightenment of Christendom, if the gospel of Christ were left out, the results would be meager in the extreme. In fact, it is doubtful whether intellectual culture could make much headway without the gospel. Not until the gospel has worked upon the hearts and excited higher aspirations do such people become responsive to the touches and exertions of intellectual culture. The civilized condition of things in those Islands and in parts of darkest Africa and in other heathen countries is directly traceable to the influences of the gospel. These facts prove most conclusively the divine power inherent in Christ's gospel. It is a power today to save from sin and degradation, a power to ennoble and elevate. A writer of high repute after thorough investigation among African tribes, especially among Hottentots, has this to say: "After a century of experience and most self-denying service among

degraded peoples of Africa, it is the unvarying testimony of missionaries, that before any improvement in the daily life and in the social conditions can be observed or even hoped for, the moral nature of such people must be first aroused, their conscience must be quickened and the better impulses of the heart must be set in motion by means of the higher motives of the Christian religion. They say also, that the most degraded wild men possess intellect sufficient to be capable of such a change, and that when once Christianity has been established and has taken root among them, all the blessings of civilization follow, as effect follows cause." We could not wish for a clearer proof of the miraculous power of Christianity to change and elevate. Infidels sometimes point to the good lives of some of their fellows, perhaps they themselves are men of clean habits and a pure life. But it is not their infidelity which has caused this; rather the fact that they cannot get rid of the noble principles of Christianity inculcated in their youth. And are not the outcries of many men indifferent to religion against wrong and their demand for justice and right dealing in public and private life a conclusive proof, that Christian principles have pervaded even those not making a profession of religion and that after all our civilization is based on these principles? There can be no doubt but that in apostolic and post-apostolic times the preaching of Christ's gospel, proclaiming him as the Redeemer of mankind who,

by his life, death and resurrection, brings all who believe into living union with God, made new men and created a new state of society, that it proved a power of renovation, transformation and elevation such as the world had never seen, and today it is the only one able to renovate, purify and ennoble individuals and peoples.

Does anyone believe that a peace conference of 44 nations were possible among heathen peoples, even among such who are civilized to a degree, like the Chinese and others? Japan has, indeed, participated at the Hague and so has China; but would either have thought of inaugurating one? Never! The willingness to participate even came from the example set by Christian nations. Conditions in this respect do not vary greatly from those of the times of early Christianity. Greeks and Romans were more civilized, if anything, than the present heathen peoples referred to; nevertheless, they were morally corrupt and for this reason principally could not withstand the incursions of barbarous tribes. Mighty Rome fell a prey to unbridled lust and consequent effeminacy. It was the power of Christianity, which in the course of time brought forth a new order of things. It is the same today. Japan, China, India will improve and become centers of culture in proportion as they imbibe the principles of Christianity and are pervaded by its power. The barbarous tribes of Africa and other parts of

the world can become civilized and enlightened only by the same power.

This is no less true of individuals. Individuals are the component parts of nations; the greater the number of truly upright and moral individuals a nation contains, the better and more elevated will be its condition. But the gospel has ever been the power to save believing souls. Paul had experienced this, millions in those early times experienced it, the reformers experienced it, millions of Christians to-day and in all Christian and many heathen lands testify gladly to the same fact. Among these are many who once were corrupt and degraded sinners, slaves of their passions and bad habits, who now are God's noblemen, lead clean and honest lives and are happy in the experimental knowledge that Christ is their Redeemer and Lord. A drunkard in Michigan, e. g., seemed beyond recovery, was despised and no longer trusted to do the work he was accustomed to and to all appearance was lost to his family. He was no longer a help nor a shield of defense, but rather the contrary. He came, per chance, (as the saying is) under the spell of the preached word, was impressed and overawed by the power of the gospel, influenced to repent and believe, became a changed man entirely, got rid even of the appetite for strong drink, was truly reformed and became an earnest and exemplary Christian, honored and esteemed by all who knew him. Examples of a similar kind could be multiplied at will. There are millions

of Christians who had not fallen so low, but whose conscience, nevertheless, was awakened and who in Christ found a strength for a noble life and a truly Christian character, and who now have an aim, a high aim in life and rejoice in a Saviour's love. What they have experienced was the miraculous power of God. The change in them and their lives is just as great and astounding as would be the healing of a sick person by direct interposition of God. They thus understand it and are standing witnesses to the truth of the fact, that miracles are not a thing of the past but occur today in our very midst.

And who will prove that miracles of a more external nature do not take place? Many Christians today testify that God more than once has answered their prayers, has made plain and straightened the path before them, has freed them from danger and helped them to endure trials and tribulations. There was the mother of a large family helpless for 15 years on a bed of disease (rheumatism); but when once upon a time ministers came to visit and console her, she was full of the praises of her Saviour who, she averred, was so good to her that she could rejoice and be happy even upon her bed of pain and helplessness. Then there are miracles of healing. The present writer was well acquainted with a family in Wisconsin whose sick child was given up as a hopeless case by several physicians. Medicine was no longer given because thought of no use. God alone could help, and parents and a few friends

called in took to prayer. They importuned and wrestled with God. Help came, the child forthwith began to recover. Many instances of wonderful rescue from danger in consequence of prayer might be given, instances well attested and full of interest. The objection then, that miracles have never occurred because they do not occur today, falls to the ground. And there are thousands of living witnesses ready to testify in their behalf.

Answers to prayer often possess all the elements of the miraculous. When Zinzendorf was on his way to West India and the storm seemed certain to engulf the vessel in the sea, he prayed to God for deliverance and received the inner assurance that they all would safely arrive at the point of destination, and he was able to impart this assurance to his fellow passengers.

On his first voyage to China Hudson Taylor and ship were storm driven and seemed certain to become a prey to the cannibals of a coral island who stood at the shore awaiting the vessel with avidity. The captain said to him: "We have done everything possible for our safety and can but await the result." "No," Taylor responded, "there is one thing we have not done as yet, and that is to pray, since there are at least four of us Christians, who believe in the efficacy of prayer. Will we not at once, each one in his own cabin, unite in prayer for safety? God can send us a wind for the purpose." Said and done, and Taylor became certain that his prayer was

answered. He returned and told the commanding officer at once to set and unfurl a few sails. But the officer laughed at him. However, a few minutes afterwards a breeze set in, sails were at once unfurled and the ship was driven in a lively manner away from the island.

Paton on the New Hebrides more than once experienced the power of God to save from imminent danger upon his believing prayer. At one time a wild heathen man followed him for days and a number of times leveled a gun at him; but every time there was an unseen power hindering the man from executing his plan.

Once during an epidemic which the islanders laid to Paton's charge, 20 or more of them came with their guns, called him out and said to him: "Your hour has come, we are going to shoot you." He calmly answered that he was ready to die and only asked them to permit him first to pray. He then lifted up his heart in silent prayer to God. When, after a short time he opened his eyes they had all disappeared. At another time his enemies had set fire to some buildings in his yard, expecting the flames would soon engulf the house. But upon Paton's petition, a storm with a drenching rain set in in an opposite direction. The wild men said: "That is the Lord's rain, God fights for him and his; let us flee!"

On the Island of Nias the missionaries were very successful in their labors, and Mr. Nommensen was

especially eminent in doing much good on the large Island of Summatra. A pagan sorcerer was much enraged against him and secretly put some deadly poison into his food. The poison had no effect whatever, in harmony with the promise in Mark 16, 15, so that said sorcerer after a while was compelled by his conscience to confess what he had done. Nom-mensen had known nothing of the deed before. A native Christian on the Island of Niassa prayed to God for the healing of a sick heathen thus: "O God, I know that thou art the true God, but these people do not know it. Show this priest that thou art mightier than his idols. I know that thou canst restore to health this sick man, and now do it for the sake of thy honor!" When that heathen man was thus restored he turned to Christ and became his follower. . . . Missionary Fries was witness of an occurrence on the same island, marvelous in the extreme. A three-year-old child, strong and healthy, was taken sick with croup, and no medicine was able to clear its throat; within ten hours the healthy child had collapsed. Immediately lamentations were made and the neighbors and friends called joined in with their loud wail and demonstrations for the dead child. An uncle of the child and a Christian, Ama Daho by name, stepped in, took the lifeless child upon his arms and while he prayed for its restoration it became alive. Knowing only that the child had died I went forward from a distance to speak words of comfort; but the child already lay

in its mother's arms. After a while it opened wide its eyes, arose and came toward me, coughed and thus got rid of the phlegm filling its throat and in two more hours could eat and drink heartily. So Missionary Fries relates. Others, especially heathen, thought him to be possessed of magical powers, but he remained the same modest and unassuming Christian as before.

These are only a few of the many examples which might be given of miraculous occurrences upon the fields of foreign missions. They take place only during times of beginning missionary operations and cease when once the kingdom is well established. We find in them a welcome verification of the miracles related in the gospels and in the Acts. As the great deeds of the apostles in healing sick people and even calling a few who had died back to life as in Acts 9: 36-42 and Chap. 20, 7-12. Things of this kind are taking place in heathen countries today which are inexplicable on any mere human grounds and are a certain indication of superhuman, yea of **divine power** at work, it may be by means of human instrumentality.

You might argue with such people that miracles are impossible and bring forth an array of evidence to prove your assertion. They would laugh you to scorn and say: 'What do we care for your arguments, assertions and evidence, as you call it; we know what we have experienced, recovery from disease, escape from imminent danger and other events

in our lives of a similar nature we know to have been possible only to the Almighty.''' Who are you to deny the reality of their experience? If you should relate some extraordinary occurrence in your life and others would make light of it, what would you think and say concerning such attitude of theirs?

Does not science stake its all on experience, especially natural science? Facts, not theories, is the watchword. Observation, experiments are called for to establish any theory. Natural science boasts of standing with both feet on solid ground because of its painstaking investigations into the fields of fact and reality. Now the people alluded to follow the same methods, they likewise do not take something for granted because others have said so, but they have tested the truth by their own experience. We must, consequently, allow that they tell the truth. In this connection we may quote the words of the philosopher Uphues, himself not at all predisposed to believe in miracles. Hear him: "Evidence of experience is the highest modern science can attain to. Thoughts, ideas must not change or doctor facts, dare not falsify them, but, on the contrary, must be content to follow facts and be corrected and established by them. Experience alone is of paramount value. When an astronomer or chemist makes a discovery or an observation, he may be certain of meeting with confidence and approval in case further experiments and observation

find the same and corroborate his assertions. Why does not modern science apply this same principle also to Christianity? Christianity is in its very essence a thing of experience. Only he who has made the experience is a Christian, only he is competent to pass judgment upon the truth of Christianity and only he has a right to be heard on the subject. In the domain of astronomy or chemistry he who passes contrary judgment on findings of investigators, without investigating himself and trying to repeat the same experiences, is shown the door. Why should it be otherwise in things of the Christian religion, which are things of experience throughout? In regard to a Christian's experience you dare not speak of your different standpoint, just as little as you dare do so in regard to what an astronomer or a chemist states of his experience. To do so would be just as ridiculous in the one case as in the other. If I should tell someone that at Berlin in Victory Avenue there stands a monument of Frederick the Great and at its side also a bust of General Schwerin and of the composer Bach, only a numskull or a fool could retort, that he occupied a different standpoint and, consequently, entertained a different view of the matter. I would, of course, say to him: 'Go to Berlin and open your eyes, and if you do not want to do this, then hold your tongue! You have no right to speak of things a knowledge of which can be obtained only through experience.' The very same answer must be given those who as

regards Christianity speak of their peculiar standpoint and put emphasis on their special opinion. Here the proud word of an Englishman is in place, when he says: 'I have seen the thing, you have not.' "

These words of the philosopher pertain to miracles also, for the Christians above quoted testify that they have experienced veritable miracles. No one, who has not himself complied with the conditions for the purpose of the same or similar experiences, has a right to call in question the testimony of such Christians.

FOURTH CHAPTER.

Miracles and One's View of the World.

Whether a man believes in miracles or not will very much depend upon the view or conception he entertains of the world. It goes without saying that one who does not believe in the existence of a God will not believe in miracles. But there are three other possible views of the nature of things and the world in general which likewise give miracles the cold shoulder.

Perhaps we had better begin with materialism. Materialism is atheistic. Nothing exists but what can in some way or other be seen, heard and handled, which can be perceived by the senses. Matter and its forces is all that exists. The natural sciences are competent to find out all about the existence of things, all about forces and what they can accomplish. The whole world ought, consequently, appear perfectly clear and luminous to the eyes of a materialist. No enigmas, no mysteries anywhere, all as clear as daylight. If such were really the case, one might well wish to be a materialist. But how could matter and its forces come into being at the start? Had no beginning, is the answer. The world is eternal. But those tiny particles of matter you speak of, atoms, ions, electrons, with such marvellous aptitudes, whence do they come? You must not

inquire, they always were? But how came the suns and planets to assume separate existence? As the result of the play of natural forces simply. But the planets in their orbits are ballanced so nicely and the whirl of suns and worlds goes on so harmoniously, as though some designing mind had arranged everything. Nonsense! A working together of natural circumstances and forces brought about simply and solely by chance. But as matter in itself is inert, how came they to be set in motion? Don't know, it simply happened. Whence plant and animal life? Sprang from inorganic matter and then went on multiplying and perfecting by evolution. Has anyone ever observed a birth of the living from the not living? No, perhaps no one ever will, but it must have taken place to account for present and past life. How about sensation and consciousness and will? There is no free will, all is necessity, and sensation and consciousness came to be somehow, who cares how? They are undoubtedly the result of organization and the play of physical forces. But how about the intellect of man, his intellectual accomplishments in science, philosophy, art, religion, civilization and culture? Nothing remarkable in all this, it is the result of development from insignificant beginnings. Man is only the most highly developed animal and some other animals may, perhaps, attain to the same degree of intelligence. Here there is no room for God or gods, all resolves itself into material forces and existences. No room for

miracles, everything that occurs or may occur can be weighed and measured or handled in some way.

But is this conception of the world true, does it measure up to the experiences of mankind? Not at all, indeed it contradicts all experience and can, therefore, never for a long time hold the attention and command the confidence of men. Years ago many believed in this view of the world (for even the materialist must exercise faith), but today it is almost wholly discarded. To believe in it one must stop thinking and ask no questions of the kind above put.

Immeasurably superior seems pantheism or pantheistic monism. We find it thousands of years ago in India and in Greece. It has been much improved and is brought down to the latest standpoint of science. But in its innermost heart it never changes. God and the world are one and the same. There is no divine life outside of the world, God is inclusive in the world. The forces and life in the world are divine, divine, consequently, the energy displayed in the tiniest existence such as the smallest twig and leaf or bit of grass or the minutest insect up to that in the activities of man in every day life, in culture the very highest—all is divine. It follows that man is really a part of God, in fact the highest manifestation of God upon earth. There is room here for a sort of religion, but it naturally must be a sort of a very self-conscious religion, seeing that of all that

is divine man is the highest manifestation, the highest being. He cannot hold converse with any being more perfect than he himself, yea not even with one as perfect, and, therefore, prayer would be folly, at least it could be holding converse only with and prayer to one's own better self. If there ever was a miracle, man must be the author of it. A miracle in the true sense of the term, a reaching down of the supernatural into the sphere of the natural, cannot take place, for there is no supernatural in this way of thinking. True, astounding miracles have been narrated in India and in Greece; but such miracles were not the outcome of pantheistic views; no, personal gods were said to be the authors of such miracles. The pantheistic way of thinking did not prove satisfactory to the hearts and the religious necessities of the people. The heart of man of every people and clime and time longs for a God who can feel and think and love and have mercy and compassion. To the modern monist his way of thinking seems grand, the dome of his view of the world seems to him noble and harmonious. No outside power, all there is is in and about him up to the stary heavens and into the inmost depths of the earth and sea. In the last analysis everything of one and the same essence. Nothing strange to man, all is akin to him, though he is really the end and meaning of all there is, since he alone can understand it and in him it finds its fulfillment. True this is, to be sure, rather of mankind than of man as an indi-

vidual. For the latter is like unto the watery billow which rises above the surrounding surface, sometimes high and mightily, but again is lost and absorbed in the ocean's whole. Men may differ and there may be mighty men who tower above their fellows; but only in degree is this possible and not in kind. Thus not a few of this way of thinking in Europe and America extol Christ as the best and greatest of men as regards religion and morals, but representing only a higher development than other men. No room here for a divine Christ in the biblical sense.

But is it true, can this universe, this world be all there is? Is it not finite? How then came it to be? There must be something infinite, if we are in any measure to understand the finite. Or is the world itself infinite? Even then, whence its wonderful arrangement of parts, and whence self-conscious man with his hunger and his longing for something higher than he is? And before man came upon the stage the world existed in beauty and harmony. How came it thus to be? Was the intellect appearing in man unconsciously at work to produce this many-sided world in all its individual parts of wonderful adaptation and perfection? In that case the unconscious all-soul was wiser, more intelligent and more powerful than conscious intellect and will is in man, who does his best in art when he imitates nature most closely. The fact is also past finding out, in that case, that man feels a void within and

longs for satisfaction of a kind which only a being infinitely supreme can give him. If pantheistic monism be true, there should have been harmonious development and there could be no consciousness in man of coming short of his duty or his privilege, nor could there be in him any consciousness of or longing for the supernatural, much less could there be any trace among men of any miraculous occurrences. But we find such traces everywhere. Man himself is a miracle incapable of explanation from or by anything preceding. Between him and the highest exemplar of the animal kingdom there is an absolute break. He differs in degree not only but in kind from everything else we are acquainted with, as science, morals, religion and the whole round of civilization and culture abundantly prove. As in a work of art the thoughts and ideals of the artist are manifest, so in the great world the thoughts and ideas of God are revealed; but to put into existence his ideas man must exist before the work of art he produces, and so God must exist before the world and must be above the world as well as in the world, if the world as we see it is to be possible and in any degree thinkable.

In Deism we find the idea of a God outside the world taking a pronounced form. And this God of Deism exerted himself in creating the world. He created it so splendidly and perfectly, however, that since the creation by his wisdom and power it can get along very well without him. The laws he im-

planted into nature are his representatives and leave him nothing further to do. It is likely that Deism hardly knows where now to place its God. In our day of constant activity a passive God with nothing to do seems an anomaly. The resourceful Greeks relegated their gods to the top of Mount Olympus and higher where they might spend their leisure time in celebrating joyful festivities. Perhaps deists think of their God as similarly engaged! Incredible nonsense! But such nonsense is really taught by not a few divines of the present day, who make man's reason supreme and say that there is really no need of a revelation or at least that man is competent to judge, whether there is one extant and what is acceptable and what is not. In nature, they say, law is supreme, and natural laws leave no room for miracles. The miraculous must, therefore, be expunged from the Bible. Christ himself cannot be miraculous, he was the greatest exponent of morals and religion, the greatest of prophets and moral teachers, but he was not divine in a higher sense or of a different kind than man. Still these men laud Christ, speak of him as the most perfect exponent of God's thoughts and morally the most perfect of men. Indeed some even concede that Christ was sinlessly perfect. Can they not comprehend that if Christ was sinlessly perfect, he was an absolutely unique personality, the only man in all history of which this could be said and that he then was the greatest of all possible miracles?

Deism is a less possible view of the world than pantheism. Both point to the right solution. God is above the world and independent of it, and also in the world so truly that you cannot separate Him from anything that is. His infinite independence of the world everywhere in the Bible is clearly presupposed. From this standpoint He does not resemble the general who fights in the thickest of the fray like any common soldier and is thus lost in the whole of his army and cannot direct it; but He is like the general upon an elevated position from which he can oversee the battlefield, watch every part of his forces and direct their movements at will. God was before the world and in creation He follows the counsels of His great plan. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." We read in Isaiah 45: 12, 21 Chap. 42, 9: "I have made the earth and created man upon it; I, even my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. Tell ye and bring them near, yea let them take counsel together: Who hath declared this from ancient time? Have I not, the Lord? And there is no God besides me. Behold the former things are come to pass and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." According to Christ's teaching God superintends the affairs of this world, numbering even the hair of our heads. He feeds the fowls of the air, how much more will He take care of men, of those who trust in Him? Paul also says that unto God are

known all His works from the beginning. In Acts 17 we read: "God hath made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth and dwelleth not in temples made with hands." God has also shaped the course of human history according to His will and to bring about the purposes of His wisdom and grace. "He giveth to all life and breath and all things, and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the time before appointed and the bounds of their habitation." Israel He chose as His especial people for accomplishing a high mission in the interests of all mankind. This idea is nowhere lost sight of, the idea of an overruling God, who creates, ordains and leads the affairs of the world according to His good pleasure, and who shapes the destinies of mankind that the highest possible good will be brought about.

But the Bible teaches the other side just as clearly, rather speaks of it as a matter of course God's power is beyond comprehension, He can do as pleases Him. His wisdom also shineth forth everywhere in all its glory. But one must be present where he acts. "Can any hide himself in secret that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth?" Jer. 23, 24. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the

uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand hold me and thy right hand shall lead me." "Darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day, the darkness and the light are both alike unto thee." Ps. 139. "In his hand are the deep places of the earth, the strength of the hills are his also. He watereth the hills from his chambers, the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle and herbs for the service of man." Ps. 59 and 104. According to these and other passages all nature is alive with the presence of God. Angels are His messengers, winds His servants, He rides upon them as upon a chariot, thunders sound forth His voice, lightning flashes are the arrows from His quiver. There is not a spot in the wide earth, yea not in all the universe, remote from Him, rather He is active there also. Before Him night is as the day, darkness as the light. No barrier anywhere to His power, no limitation to the workings of His wisdom, because His presence pervades all. He is present in the lilies of the field when they grow and arrays them in a glory which transcends that of Solomon (Matth. 6). He upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebr. 1, 3), renewing their strength and sustaining their very life. "He does not need anything, seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things needful" (Acts 17, 25). "He is not far from everyone of us, for in Him we live, move and have our being" (Acts 17). Here you have pantheism

with a will. It goes beyond pantheism. God is not only in the world, He is not only the ever present life in the world, but the world rather is in Him. This is by far the grander conception. He pervading everything and at the same time everything in Him, so that He is also above and beyond everything. Thus He can direct the interplay of forces and tell atoms and ions how to act and in fact is the power present to carry on the movements desired and necessary to bring about the purposes of His will. Pantheism includes God in the world and keeps Him imprisoned there as with iron fetters; biblical theism sees on hill and dale, in the grass and in the flower, in the mighty oak and in the tiny plant, in the gentle rain and in the thundering water-fall the workings of His ever present wisdom and power; but it sees Him also above all this, infinitely greater than the world with all its multitudinous phenomena and all its vastness.

Here we have the clue to the innumerable enigmas meeting the naturalist on every side in his investigations of nature. He has it to do with secondary causes, with the interplay of natural forces, with the growth of a plant and the nourishment needful for the purpose, he describes the forces of nature and the manner in which they act, from the atom up to the planet revolving around its sun and the mighty suns of incomprehensible greatness. Investigate and describe the ways of nature is all he can do. Queries arise in his mind a thousand times,

queries he cannot answer and which lie outside and beyond his sphere of research. What was it that set the original mass of matter in motion? Atoms, ions and electrons, invisibly small and seemingly meaningless, display such wonderful likes and dislikes to and of each other, execute such complicated and wisely directed movements in order to form larger and higher combinations of matter up to the organization of plants and animals, that their forces seem preordained, their movements designed. How is all this to be explained? Such and similar questions will arise in the naturalist's mind. It is not his business nor duty to answer or solve them, unless he wants to leave the domain of scientific investigation and enter that of philosophy or faith. But the solution is to be found in biblical theism. Nature is aglow with the life of God. He has planned everything and the interplay of natural forces, attraction and repulsion, chemical affinity, gravitation and all the multitudinous manifestations of plant and animal life are but the expression of His thoughts and are but a form of His will and His life. Does radium seem an inexhaustible store house of heat and light? We know its source. Do the X rays penetrate the darkness even through closed doors? A faint indication of the Eye everywhere alert and piercing into innermost being. Do electric waves carry the thoughts and words of man through the air for hundreds of miles? The atmosphere and the entire world is one great speaking

gallery of the thoughts and words of Him who makes His wish and will felt even in the heart and conscience of man. The laws of nature are the expressions of His will, relate the manner in which He there acts.

Who will dictate to Him as to what He may do and what not? Shall the God of infinite resources be confined to one mode of action and may He not change the manner of His doings, if thereby He wills to bring to pass something of paramount importance? A poor artist who can paint only one kind of stereoscope pictures, who cannot vary his designs and colors and thus bring forth something new! And is God the slave of His own laws, as pantheism would have it, or rather cannot He vary the manner of His activity so that we shall have to say: Here is something extraordinary, an occurrence, an event which has not come about in the ordinary way, a veritable indication of a higher skill and power than we usually observe, a miracle?

Biblical theism then is a higher conception of the world than any other. It enables us to answer the queries which arise in the paths of the naturalist's investigations and which he with all the light of science brought to bear upon them cannot answer. Here is God in reality. The God of Deism acted as God only at the time of creation and since then is God no longer. An impossible conception. The God of pantheism is a bundle of forces and laws to which he is a slave and from which he cannot extricate

himself. Biblical theism alone teaches a God who brings forth all the activity we behold in the works of nature, and who at the same time is free to make use of these forces at His pleasure for higher purposes of being. He is also a wonder working God. Should anyone object by saying, that then caprice holds sway and the uniformity secured by the play of unalterable laws is broken and we can no longer know what to count on? The course of nature itself is the best answer to such objection. The omnipresent God so acts everywhere in nature that its stability is assured. In the light only of this conception the world has a meaning, and in order to realize such meaning, in order that the world may finally reach the goal to which it is tending, there must be stable ways of development, there must be sense and purpose in all that takes place.

What miracle narrated in the Bible upsets the established order of things? The great miracle of creation established such order. The miracles in Egypt at the time of the exodus were natural occurrences, only accelerated and of extraordinary violence. Suppose Balaam's ass actually spake in the language of man; how would that disturb the ongoing course of events? The "standing still of the sun and moon" at Joshua's behest does appear frightful; but could the omnipresent and almighty God not prevent a smash-up of the universe? And this miracle admits of a different interpretation. A condition of the atmosphere not unknown may have

made the sun visible long after it was time for it to pass below the horizon.

Foot note: The verses reporting the conversation between Balaam and the ass may be considered an interpolation, or they may be held to mean that he understood the actions of the ass to convey the meaning indicated by the words reported. The words of Joshua may be considered a prayer for strength to do the work in hand in a shorter time than would else be required. The sacred writer points to the event as one narrated in a poetical book, that of Jasher, so that the interpretation given would not be unnatural.

FIFTH CHAPTER.

The True Meaning of Miracles.

Materialism and pantheism both cannot conceive of man as free. They speak of his will as the force in him that decides and acts; but there is no choice, man must uniformly act as he does, his volitions follow the strongest motives or he is compelled to follow the path of action laid out before him. Necessity reigns not only in all the domains of nature, but also within the circle of human activity. But must not the same be true according to biblical theism? If God is everywhere the one great force which acts, why then He is also the paramount power acting in man. Man may appear to possess a will of his own, but in reality this is not the case, his will is a phantom, free will an hallucination of his brain. He acts as directed and as impelled by a higher will.

Such would be the case, if God were inclusive in nature, if He did not also transcend it, if He were not personality. Thus the Bible represents Him. Christ has taught us to look up to Him as Father who mercifully cares for us and all His children. In creating man He fulfilled a purpose of His love, and endowed him in such a manner that he might in turn love God who first loved him. This implies free will, implies that he might do what pleased his Creator and also, on the other hand, what displeased

Him. Man was not at once a perfect personality, but should become such by the right use of his powers in a development striving to reach such a goal. Even now man is free to choose the right or the wrong course of action. Philosophers and theologians may dispute about this as much as they please, the one holding to freedom and the one denying it agree in treating their fellows as though they possessed the power of choice. We are conscious also of possessing such power. When one decides on following a certain line of action he is aware that he might have made a contrary choice. In the Bible we find this to be clearly taught or presupposed. When his Creator told him what not to do it was clearly implied that he might pursue the course he chose. The decalogue with its prohibitions meaning throughout, that man was to love God supremely and his fellows as himself, is proof conclusive that according to biblical conception man can strive to do what is good or follow that which is evil.

As a matter of fact man chose the wrong course and soon was on a downward grade of development. Among the descendants of the first human pair sin was soon rife and bore dreadful fruit. All history up to the present demonstrates the truth of what is generally called the fall of man. Does anyone doubt the fact of sin? Let him look into his own heart and closely watch his own life, and he will doubt no longer. Indeed the consciousness of sin is universal.

A single issue of a daily paper is sufficient to convince one of its fearful ravages. There is no saying what mankind would have already come to, if God had not from the start put the forces of good in operation to counteract the forces of evil.

Or should God permit His creature to frustrate the great purpose of His creative wisdom? Permit the creature to upset the counsels of the Creator? Or shall man be able to defy God and bring to naught the design He had in creating the world? Never! God cannot vacate the throne of His omnipotence. What He has purposed within Himself that must come to pass. He may make use of other means and follow different methods from those He would have followed, if man had remained obedient and on his upward course had brought into full play the possibilities inherent in him and laid out before him. But the Creator was not taken by surprise. He was prepared to meet the contingency which by man's wrong course became a fact and to attain the purposes of His will, nevertheless.

What was God's purpose in creation? To have a world in which His glory might shine forth, the glory of His wisdom and power not only, as in the case of the material world, but the glory of His moral excellences, of His holiness, righteousness and love. For this reason He created man in His own image, endowed him with the capacities of choice, of righteousness and love, in order that he might continually strive for and attain a higher state of

perfection. By sin this course of development has been arrested and reversed. At the very threshold, however, God put into operation the forces of good to check and counteract the downward trend and, in due time, to work out His design and finally to let all the universe behold His glory.

Mankind and the history of mankind was to be the battlefield of the contending forces. Every man has his part to play in the mighty contest. But it is God who overrules all for bringing about the fulfillment of His counsels and the perfection of His world. He must, as it were, inaugurate a new development, bring into action forces to counteract the ravages of sin, curtail its power, more and more overcome its influence. This is the meaning of Israel as the chosen people, which was to be the especial vehicle of His thoughts and purposes in history up to a time when God's glory was most fully to appear in person. "When the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His son, made of a woman and put under the law," Before Christ, in "times past He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, nevertheless, He left Himself not without witness." The choice of Israel as the especial vehicle of revelation did not mean, that heathen peoples were to be left entirely in the cold without any ray of His light. Heathen religions prove that there was some light for them also; but moral and religious light was to be, in a special sense, concentrated in Israel, and the forces of redemption were here to be specially

active. Christ was to be the shining center of God's redemptive activity, all previous history pointing to him and all subsequent history to be illumined by the forces of light and life radiating from him.

Now such a course of history naturally involved special demonstrations of God's life and power. Were hindrances in the way? They had to be overcome. Must the course of Israel's history follow separate channels and work out special designs? God so overruled the course of events that this was accomplished. Thus the beginnings of Israel as a people would call for special direction and manifestations of special power. Heathen traditions had to be broken, the true God be made known, the confidence of the people in Him elicited and confirmed. It was perfectly natural, therefore, that in those times wonderful occurrence should take place and miracles be enacted. So we find it. The plagues of Egypt, the passage through the "Red Sea," the marvelous doings and occurrences in the wilderness until after the conquest of the Holy Land, are extraordinary events and such as could have been wrought only by superhuman power; still almost without exception they do not disturb or make of none effect the natural order, though they do show that a higher power than was generally observed was at work in their performance. And when the perverse nation went its own way and was led astray by idolatrous kings, when the very existence of a divinely directed course of history for the chosen people seemed in question

and a Samuel and an Elijah was called on to become the vehicles of God's will; in those dark days of seeming retrogression special demonstrations of divine power were necessary and in order, and so we find a number of unmistakable miracles again inaugurated and coming into play. There are a few isolated miracles related as occurring at other times, and we might possibly style the proclamations of the prophets concerning the future miraculous, since their own wisdom or foresight could not have enabled them to forecast coming events. But miracles in the proper sense we find mostly in those times of special need, and we find them still more numerous and truly God-given at the time of Christ and the apostles. We should expect this. When the leadings of God in history were to find their preliminary goal and fulfillment, when Christ was to appear and did appear as the representative of divine life and power upon earth, in order to impart this life to others and to make it a permanent and active factor in shaping future history; at that time this divine life must necessarily prove its existence and display its meaning, which could not possibly be done without miracles.

From the foregoing the meaning of miracles becomes clear. They are not the doings of caprice, as is the case with those related among heathen peoples, which often are so queer and nonsensical, but they are divine doings with the inherent purpose of establishing a new order of things, a higher order

of deveelopment, of eliminating the evil and strengthening and establishing the good, of raising nature upon a higher plane. Miracles thus become full of meaning and have a right to be, in faet the purposes of God could not be realized without them. For this reason they are often styled signs simply as in John 2:11, where the turning of water into wine is called the beginning of signs, and in Chap. 4, 48 and in 20, 30. They were signs of divine power, signs that Christ was the possessor of such power, that he, consequently, was the Christ, the son of the living God.

Miracles were necessary to establish a new and higher order of things, or, perhaps, it would be more proper to say, to reestablish the order of things God contemplated in creation. By sin and its attendant evils, that order was disturbed, thrown out of its course, greatly endangered. Above all the majesty of God's moral law was impugned, set at defiance, and even his wisdom and goodness questioned. Now this could not be allowed. Man must make restitution. God must remain supreme and as judge of the universe He could not allow His laws to be tampered with. But man can make no adequate restitution. Full punishment, therefore, would have been in order. Such punishment, however, would necessarily have wiped out man and made impossible history and the realization of the divine plan. We have seen, that such a course would have hurled God from the throne of His omnipotence. So the

course of redemption through Christ must be inaugurated and incorporated into history. As man could not make restitution and the majesty of law must, nevertheless, be upheld, God Himself must see to it that the majesty of transgressed law be restored and the way opened to take man again unto His bosom. Christ both as God's and as man's representative accomplished this by his death on the cross. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past (through the forbearance of God), to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth" (Romans 3,25 and 26). Christ's offering himself on the cross for the sins of mankind emphasizes the inviolability of law in the religious and moral universe. The majesty of such law must be upheld, and it was and is upheld by the cross of Christ, including his resurrection. There was no other way for bringing about the purposes of His will, and Christ, therefore, whose will was always in perfect accord with the divine will, took upon himself to carry out the task. According to this mode of thinking, then, miracles are not a disruption of law, but they rather uphold and establish the true order of things originally intended and, in consequence of what Christ was and did, sure to come to glorious fulfillment.*

* Perhaps many would not go to this extent, they would contend that Christ's death was necessary only in the sense that so only could men be broug't to believe in God's mercy and love. Such a view would be sufficient for the argument here indicated.

SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Greatest of Miracles.

In the world we know man is the greatest and most wonderful workmanship of the Creator. An ascending series we behold in inorganic nature, in plant and animal life, reaching its climax in man. The insignia of royalty are put upon his brow. As the Bible puts it, he was to have and exercise dominion over the vegetable and animal kingdom, indeed over all the earth. But in a forest there are trees innumerable and among these some which tower above the rest, and among animals and fowls of the air there are the lion and the eagle. So among the many millions of the human kind there are illustrious exemplars, individuals of note who tower above their fellows and in whom the forces of humanity seem to be concentrated in an especial manner. These great personalities are the real moving and constructive factors of history. In most recent times this has been gainsaid and it has been held, that peoples at large, the generality of men are the propelling forces of development; but even according to this view there must be comparatively few men who are able to execute and direct. We may admit that ideas of what ought to be are vaguely located in the minds of the many, but without sufficient force to inaugurate a new departure and

bring about marked changes. It is not until what all vaguely feel is concentrated in a single great personality that it begins to emit light and heat and power.

So we find it among the peoples of antiquity and in the nations of modern times. For proof it would be easy to present an array of names. Charles (Charlemagne) and Otto the Great, Alfred the Great and Cromwell, Napoleon, Frederick the Great, Bismarck and Gladstone, Washington and Lincoln at once occur to one. Then there are the lights of science and art and, above all, the geniuses in religion. These are the greatest because religion is fundamental, is intended to be the heart from which go forth the pulse beats of life in all directions, giving force and direction to the exertions of will. Most if not all of the above named men have felt this to be the case and have given expression to it in the prayer of faith. The most recent instance, perhaps, of a deceased statesman is the saying of Bismarck quoted above: "I know not from whence to take my feeling of duty if not from God. . . . I am content if I can find out, whereunto God would lead and then to limp after Him." The religious forces are the under current which give direction and form to the life of peoples. Great religious geniuses, therefore, wield the greatest influence. Think of a Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, Luther, Calvin. But the greatest of all is Jesus Christ, from whom as a central sun goes forth life

and power for all. His great meaning for and his mighty influence on mankind is indicated by the fact that his birth is considered the dividing line of history, time being counted backward and forward from that event. Nor is his influence on the wane, rather on the increase. Many in our day would detract from his glory, and a contest of thoughts and words is going on concerning him which is proof conclusive how much is at stake and what a great problem his personality forms.

Those detracting from his towering greatness for the most part profess to be doing so in the interest of religion. A divine Christ, the Son of God incarnate, they say, is a stumbling block to the thought of our age. Such a being would represent a break in the continuity of history, would be a miracle of so stupendous proportions that it cannot be allowed and such as men nowadays, enlightened by the results of science, will not believe. In order to become acceptable to men Christ must be considered a mere man, though the greatest from a religious point of view. It may well be questioned, whether detracting thus from the greatness of Christ is doing religion a service. Perhaps some men, who have persuaded themselves that they are quite good by nature, do not need a redeemer, it suffices them if Christ showed them the way of obedience and duty and thus the way to meet the divine favor. But most men, if not all, are conscious of their moral shortcomings, know they are sinners and are ac-

cursed in the light of God's (moral) law. They need not only a great moral teacher, they rather need a Saviour from sin and its guilt, they need a life divine to save them also from the power of sin. The exertions noted are also made, they contend, in the interests of science which cannot allow that miracles are possible. As shown above this is a mere assertion not supported by facts, scientists themselves being witness.

But let us meet these detractors on their own ground. What they must admit as undoubtedly true of Christ is sufficient for all purposes. Christ was a mere man and born, like other men, from human parents. His religious aptitude was extraordinary from youth up. The influences of the temple and of the synagogue were great, the teachings also of a pious father and mother in Old Testament history may have contributed greatly in shaping his ideas about God and His doings in history and filling him with reverence for the great personages of the Hebrew people. Nature, too, with which he held intimate converse, seemed to him to tell of God and relate the story of His creative wisdom and power. Thus Jesus grew to manhood and soon felt astir in himself the thoughts of God's will as reported in the Old Testament and became conscious of an intense desire to become an exponent of this will among his people. Such desire after a while became a mighty impulse which he felt to be given of God, and he then became conscious that he was

called of God to become a prophet of righteousness to his people. His deliverances differed from those of all other men, even of the greatest Hebrew prophets, in being born of a clearer vision of God and His ways and thoughts. He taught men to pray unto God as their Father who cares and provides for them, indeed who loves them as no human father could love his children. The great idea of righteousness was not lose sight of, but love was emphasized as the real life of God. Evidently he himself considered himself pre-eminently an object of God's love. He was conscious of most intimate relations with his heavenly Father and ever was alert to do His bidding. His fellow men he loved with an intense love, spending his life and all the powers of his being in doing them good, in making them acquainted with and leading them to God, in alleviating suffering and going about as a ministering angel among those in trouble and distress. It must be confessed, never before nor since was pure disinterested love exemplified so fully and nobly as by Jesus in all that he said and did. Never a trace of the least selfishness, nowhere a sign of anything wrong in word or deed. To all appearance he was conscious of perfect purity in thought, desire, will and action. "Which of you convinceeth me of sin?" (John 8, 46) he boldly asks his enemies. The fourth gospel, however, is by some considered a work of late date and they would take objection to proving his sinlessness from this gospel. But we find the

same consciousness in the other gospels, in passages which cannot be gainsaid. The healing of the man sick of the palsy is narrated in the three first gospels. Christ here admits that God alone can forgive sins, but he claims that same power for himself, since he asserts that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, and as a proof of such power he then heals the sick and enables him by the word of his mouth to walk and move about. Christ well knew that he could not forgive sins, if he himself was sinful. The Lord's prayer is considered genuine by the severest critics, and in it he teaches his disciples and all of us up to the present to ask forgiveness of God for our transgressions. But for himself he never thus prayed for forgiveness. He forgave the sins of that sinful woman in a Pharisee's house (Luke 7), invites all those weary and heavy laden with their sins and troubles unto himself (Matt. 11), asserts that he has come into the world to seek and save from sin those which are lost (Luke 19); but nowhere do we find the least indication in any of his words that he himself needed forgiveness in any respect for any wrong in thought, word or deed. He knows all men to be sinful, that he himself, however, is sinless and that he can free them of their sins and heal their iniquities. We find him conscious, then, of sinless perfection. Was there ever a man in the wide world before or after of whom this can be said? No! A miracle consequently of the most stupendous kind.

His life fully measures up to this fact. He came into contact with all manner of men, but always took in fully the circumstances and every time measured up to the requirements imposed by them. His patience, longsuffering and endurance was put to the severest test; but he never once lost his temper, never once expressed a rash word or performed a rash act. He could in strong terms hurl the truth at his enemies, always in such a manner, however, as made clear his sorrow at their sinful perversion. Amid the ridicule, the sneers and the scoffing of his enemies he remained perfectly serene and unruffled, he never once lost his equilibrium and perfect poise. When arrested in the garden, when standing before the Sanhedrin, the high priests and elders, or when before the presence of Pilate, his silence bespoke innocence of the accusations arrayed against him, his words were the expression of his abiding love toward his fellows, of his mission on earth given by his Father, of perfect clearness of vision into the truth and reality of things and of his firm determination to carry out the designs of eternal mercy and love. "If Socrates died as a sage, Jesus Christ died as a God," said Rousseau. Other men are more or less onesided in their personal makeup. The man of intellectual astuteness and strong reasoning powers is often deficient in feeling or inferior in strength of will; superior will power is often allied with but a moderate degree of mental grasp, and even so may become the mighty conqueror who un-

feelingly treads under his iron heel tribes and peoples or, if endued with deep feeling, is likely to turn out a religious fanatic. Christ possessed a strong and clear intellect, but not at the expense of feeling or will power. We find all three in him in perfect accord and harmony.

We see this fact beautifully exemplified in the raising of the young man at Nain (Luke 7). At a glance Christ takes in all the circumstances, understands the widow's condition, her great sorrow, what the son was to her, is filled with strong compassion, wishes to help her, finds he can do so best by restoring him to life and has the requisite strength of will to carry out this purpose. What he sees and feels to be good and necessary he can bring about, and as though it were an every day occurrence he says unto the young man, Arise!

He was not a philosopher and did not build up speculative systems of thought. He rather was at the center of things and saw their true relation as in a vision; he sat upon a mountain summit and overlooked the world of reality; he heard the heart-beat of humanity pulsate in his own breast, understood its longing and its ailments. No, he did not speculate about things and the world at large, but in his words he in the simplest manner expressed the great facts and the underlying principles of reality, to which men must ever return if they would rightly understand the world and its meaning.

How tender and deep was his feeling!! The widow's tears aroused his compassion, the hardness and perverseness of those cities (Matth. 11) which had seen so many of his mighty deeds and still had persisted in their wicked way filled him with sorrow, and the ravages of death upon his friend Lazarus at Bethany brought tears to his eyes. But he never once gave way to his feelings in a manner to detract from the freshness and the vigor of his action.

Generally we accord that man great will power who has accomplished mighty deeds, as e. g. the general, the conqueror or statesman who by his skill and strength of purpose has bent others to his plans and in so doing has overcome all intervening hindrances. Has ever man accomplished as much as Christ? Napoleon once said: "Alexander and Cesar, Charlemagne and I have founded mighty empires by the sword, but they did not endure and soon came to naught; Christ founded a vastly greater empire than ours combined on love, and even to day millions of his followers would gladly die for him." But may not for endurance and suffering even a greater will power be needed than for aggressive action? What a strength of purpose there must have dwelt in Christ serenely to withstand the constantly increasing onslaughts of his adversaries, to endure their mockings and their raileries, to behold the cross of Calvary clearly in the distance and nevertheless not to deviate an inch from the appointed road of duty, though, as he

knew, it would certainly bring on the catastrophe? What an unconquerable determination there was necessary to accomplish by suffering his great mission of saving the world from sin! What a force of error, of superstition, of hatred, of wrong, of bloody persecution there was arrayed against him, and he never once shrank from carrying out his purpose of love! Did he lie prostrate in the garden under the load of the world's guilt and under the wrath of divine justice? It was because he put himself in place of sinful humanity to carry their burdens and cause them to believe in divine mercy and compassion. And on the cross did his Heavenly Father seem to turn away from him when representing mankind in his suffering? It was to show how Christ even then grasped God's love when he said: "My God, my God!" and when shortly his words "It is finished!" rang out upon the air, were not these words a cry of victory, were they not the expression of his consciousness that he had by his death on the cross made clear God's love to men as nothing else could, and that no longer anything stood in the way of their becoming His true children and people after His own heart? What a tremendous strength of purpose and will comes to light in all this? Is there anywhere a parallel to this exhibition of will power in all the annals of human history? Indeed nowhere!

So we see in Christ intellect, will and feeling in perfect accord, enabling him at all times to carry

out the divine purpose and doing fully by action and suffering what was necessary to be done for the welfare of his fellows, for the welfare of humanity. The necessary clearness of vision, the requisite depth of feeling and the indomitable purpose to do and suffer what was needed never once left him for a moment. He was alway at one with the thoughts of God and felt inseparably united to mankind by the bonds of love. In thought, word and deed he realized the divine ideal of what man should be, and it is from this standpoint that Christ called himself the Son of Man. In using this name he was conscious also that he could bring all men to the Father and empower them to realize the divine ideal, to become like unto himself.

Now I ask again, taking into consideration what has been set forth above, and the half has not been told; was and is not Christ the greatest of miracles? Is not his personality unique? Can his sinless perfection be explained upon any natural grounds or by means of any common principle of interpretation? Is it not perfectly clear that all common methods of approach fail? Those who contend that he was the son of a human mother not only but of a human father may answer this question: If he was born into the world like all other men, why then is he so unlike all other men?? Here is the one man in the history of mankind, who without fail always did that which was right and good in the sight of God, and according to the highest principles of jus-

tice and love among men. How is this possible, if in his personal makeup, he was not unlike other men? He is the perfectly beautiful flower of human history, the answer to the longing of men after God, the answer to their desire for righteousness and the pleasure of God. Because he is the only one of all who realizes the divine ideal and is able to accomplish the divine purpose in the world of mankind, therefore he must be more than human, he must also be divine. The divine brought to light in the human and bringing about in Christ the perfection of humanity, that is the great miracle we see accomplished in him. If both his parents were human, then the miracle is all the greater and defies any attempt at explanation. The Virgin Birth seems by far the easier explanation.

Most wonderful of all is his consciousness of his divine sonship. The fourth gospel abounds with expressions by him to that effect, as e. g., "I and the Father are one, my father worketh hitherto and I work, before Abraham was I am, glorify me, Father, with the glory I had with thee before the world was." But we find similar expressions in the first three gospels. If God alone can forgive sins and Christ does of his own accord forgive them, then he was conscious of divine power. He says in Matth. 11: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." He knows himself, consequently, to be in such intimate rela-

tions with God as no one else can claim, and his knowledge of God is original, is his by right of sonship, and through him alone can men acquire a true knowledge of God. In Matth., Mark and Luke, Christ speaks of the future, portrays it in a measure and announces not only his resurrection months beforehand, but also that he as king and lord of his Kingdom, shall come again and bring all nations to a finish which he undertook to accomplish. He says that at the end of days he will judge (Matth. 25) all mankind. Every man that ever lived upon the face of the earth will have to bow to his authority and abide by the sentence pronounced upon him. There is not a passage in John's gospel more majestic than Matth. 27, 64: "I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." The high priest had conjured him by the living God to tell the court, whether he was the Christ, the Son of God. And this was his answer. He avowed that he was in the highest sense. The meaning is clear. He was and could be the Son of Man only because he was also the Son of God. His consciousness included both these facts, and now we no longer are surprised that he talks of the future of his kingdom, of his second advent and of his judging the quick and the dead.

These words of his are so marvelous that a few men in our day have ventured to express the idea that Christ was carried away by his enthusiasm,

was off his poise, yea was insanely self-conscious and suffered at times under spells of mind-aberration. Preposterous! The most humble of men carried away by hallucinations of his greatness, the one man in all history always in perfect control of himself and never for a moment thrown off his base by the most rabbid onslaughts of his adversaries, unbalanced and losing his equilibrium! These men themselves have lost their equilibrium in their mad endeavor to strip Christ of his glory.

In Christ, then, we see the divine and human perfectly blended. However, we may explain it, the fact cannot be denied. Christ could be the one perfect man because he alone was the willing and receptive embodiment of divine life. Augustine once said: "God, thou hast created us unto thyself, and our heart is restless within us, until it findeth rest in thee!" The longing of Christ after God was ever satisfied because there was nothing to separate him from God, because he stood in a relation to God, which can be best expressed in terms of sonship. A miracle is a natural event viewed from the divine side. In Christ the divine is seen in and through the human, so that John could say: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and thuth." The person of Christ then is the greatest miracle imaginable.

We need, therefore, no longer marvel at the mir-

acles performed by him. Indeed it were inexplicable, if he had not performed miracles. He came into the world to righten that which was wrong, and if anything stood in his way and would hinder him in accomplishing his purposes, such hindrance must give way before him. He must alleviate sorrow, must lighten the load of affliction, must heal the sick, cleance the leper, cause the blind to see, and the lame to walk, and even, if it furthered God's purposes in the world and enhanced His glory, raise the dead from their slumber. Only three cases of raising the dead are reported, but undoubtedly he healed many sick many more than we find narrated or have any idea of. People believed in him and we believe in him not on account of his miracles so much as because of his unique and wonderful personality. But it would have been unnatural if he had not performed miracles, and these, therefore, helped to inspire and confirm faith.

“But we all feel that Christ performed such deeds not for the sake of the miracles themselves. He does not perform them in order to be a miracle worker. His heart impels him and his compassion causes him to help those in distress. Neither is it bodily suffering especially he seeks to relieve. He did not want to be considered a physician. He had something higher in view. All his activity really has for its aim, is the salvation of the soul. By means of his miracles, he simply desires to strengthen and awaken faith. The doing of miracles is nat-

ural for him, he is always conscious of possessing miraculous power, myriads of angels are at his service, if he wishes to employ them; but he puts his power at the service of his calling as saviour of men. Those miracles are to glorify him for the purpose of eliciting and strengthening faith in him for the saving of souls. Miracles are a symbol of the salvation he came to bring. They are not deeds performed at random, but morally conditioned, therefore deeds of power not only but of saving love.”—Luthardt.

There is one miracle, however, which is more essential and of greater import than all the rest. These he performed while on earth, the one transpired after his death. It might be considered a debatable question, whether it was performed by Christ or was the direct act of the Father. The latter view is stated in Rom. 4, 25, where he is said to have been raised up for our justification, the former we find in 1 Cor. 15, 4. Paul here asserts, that the contents of the gospel he preached unto the Corinthians included also the fact that Christ arose again on the third day. These two views are not antagonistic to each other. Paul entertains them both, and he was a good reasoner. In Rom. 1, 4, it is said that Christ was shown or proven (this better expresses the original than “declared”) to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead. The power spoken of was the power of God in which Christ participated, and his resurrection was accord-

ing to the spirit of holiness, meaning that for a person of such holy perfection as Christ to arise again from the dead was but natural. It may mean also that the Father could not permit the Son of His love, who so perfectly carried out His will on earth in redeeming sinful mankind, to see corruption. This certainly is the biblical view. When on the cross Christ cried out: "It is finished," he felt that the work given him of the Father was fully accomplished, and that death could not stand in the way of such accomplishment. It was an outcry of victory, and that victory over all the forces of sin and darkness must show itself in his resurrection. The Father's honor, justice and love was at stake; He could not leave Christ alone in the abode of death after having in person, action and suffering, measured up so fully to the incomparable great responsibility put upon him by divine justice and love. Christ before his passion felt within himself the power of an endless life. The predictions of his death and resurrection prove this (see Matth. 16 and 17, Mark 8 and 11, and Luke 9 and 17). In harmony with these utterances are the words in John: "I am the life, as the Father has life in Himself, so has He given the Son to have life in himself, I am the resurrection and the life."

The question might be: What is the meaning of his resurrection? Is simply spiritual immortality intended, the fact that his soul should have an eternally continued existence, or is the import, that

his body was again made alive? The latter is certainly the case. The former view would be meaningless. What difference in such case would there be between him and others? Have not all Christians alike the hope and assurance of a blissful immortality? Do not even heathen peoples believe in continued existence? Did not Plato of old write a treatise on the soul's immortality? What special import could there possibly be in Christ's resurrection if nothing more were meant? Indeed the word resurrection itself would then be wholly out of place. The word means **rising** or **risen again**. How could it have been possible to know that he had arisen from the dead if only his soul continued to live and his body remained in the sepulchre? Nay, verily! His predictions referred to above are clear enough. He speaks of his coming death, which could only mean the death of his body, and he is sure that this body of his will be raised again.

This view alone suffices. Christ became man in the full sense of that term. His body was not a phantom, as gnostics of early times contended. It was a real body of flesh and blood, muscles, sinews and nerves. Christ came to redeem men from sin and its consequences. But "if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished," says Paul in 1 Cor. 15. Only by means of his bodily resur-

rection could it be known that Christ had really overcome death, that the words he spake were words of life and power, that he really was the saviour of the world and the redeemer from sin and death, which he professed to be; thus alone could faith in him be awakened, thus alone could his disciples be endued with the courage and power necessary to preach the gospel, to override all obstacles in their way and calmly to face even death in the fulfillment of the mission entrusted to them by their Master. Without being perfectly convinced that he had arisen from the dead, these men would not have had the courage nor ability to spread the gospel, and Christianity would have died with its founder.

Christ's risen body was the same as that laid to rest, but it was changed, transformed, glorified. His transfiguration (Matth. 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9) points in this direction. If death is to be swallowed up in life, what was corruptible in the body must be put aside or changed so as to be in conformity to spiritual and perfected reality. Christ now had perfect control over his body, could appear and disappear and could be where he wanted to. Contrary to law? No, in conformity with a higher law of being. In view of the present state of natural science, not nearly as incomprehensible as it might seem. The theory is becoming supreme, and there are many things in its favor, that in the last analysis matter is energy, force. Christ, possessing divine

power, finds it the easier to control his body, to make it visible and invisible. Nor must it be forgotten that God's original intention was that man through obedience should become immortal in body also, and as Christ was the perfect man, he could die only by being put to death, and his hold on life was so great that he could and must reanimate his body and make it conform to perfect life.

From the above it is clear that miracles are a part of God's plan of redemption, that especially Christ's miracles are inseparable from his absolutely perfect personality and from his mission as the world's redeemer, that this is true in the fullest sense of his resurrection, and that, consequently, if it can be shown that the miracles recorded were actually performed, and that he certainly arose from the dead, then our just expectations are fully met and the truth of the Christian religion established.

SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Miracles Are Historical Facts.

Not a few modern men and theologians even deny this. Prof. Hilty of Switzerland, a learned jurist and the author of a fine book on "Happiness," is a good reasoner, well acquainted with the gospels, the New Testament and early Christianity, and, nevertheless, believes in the resurrection of Christ and that he performed the miracles recorded of him. Adolf Harnack, Prof. of theology in Berlin, a learned and painstaking church historian, does not believe in Christ's resurrection, and seeks roundabout ways for getting rid of the miracles of the Master and his apostles, as can be seen from his "The Essence of Christianity." The two men had the same publisher for their books, and the publisher sent Harnack's work to Hilty. But the latter would have none of it, because in it was denied the fact of Christ's resurrection. Harnack was much put out and wrote to Hilty, that he should like to demonstrate to him (Hilty) his (Harnack's) system of the resurrection. Hilty answered that he was done with a man who undertook to put a spun-out system of thought in the place of a certain fact of history. Our faith, he said, rests on the resurrection of Christ, and without such basis the fabric of Christianity will crumble in the dust.

This is putting the antagonism between the two views none too sharply. That Harnack should object to miracles, especially to Christ's resurrection, is all the more a riddle, because of his great historical knowledge and the fact that in consequence of such knowledge he holds that all the books of the New Testament (with the possible exception of 2 Peter) were written by the men whose names they bear and were, consequently, written quite early, only the writings of St. John are late and were composed, perhaps, in the nineties of the first century. In this view he agrees with that prince of living New Testament critics of positive convictions, Dr. Bernh. Weiss, likewise of Berlin University. It is a mystery how Harnack can be certain that the traditional view of the New Testament writings is the correct one, and can still brush aside the miracles as of minor importance and can undertake to explain them in a way so as to lose their miraculous character.

That, I suppose, is the price he pays for being "modern." Miracles are impossible to his way of thinking and can, therefore, not have taken place. Very queer, indeed, that it has not occurred to him to inquire, how the reports of their occurrence could possibly have found entrance in those early documents, written at a time when many must have still lived who were either eye-witnesses or knew such who were.

Either, or. The New Testament writings, especially the gospels are either a narration of facts

and authentic documents of revelation, or they are a conglomeration of fables meriting no credence whatever.

“If the miracles of early Christianity were historical facts, then the gospel of Christ is the greatest reality of history. In that case the gospel is still of the most important concern also to modern man, and would retain its unique importance even if no human being believed in it and all people of the 20th century should unanimously declare against it.

“On the other hand, if the miracles reported are legends simply, why then the gospel in apostolic times, and in all times following, would be the greatest humbug imaginable and would remain the greatest humbug of history even in case all men of all times had implicitly believed in it.”—L. von Gerdell.

Whether we hold to the one or the other of these views depends on the position we take in regard to the possibility of miracles and, in consequence, to the question whether they have actually taken place or not. We have seen above that natural science and philosophy by no means compel us to disbelieve in the occurrence of miraclees, that in the course of the history of redemption we should rather expect them, that Christ would be a still greater enigma than he is, if he had performed no miracles, and that his resurrection was the natural sequence to the

fact of his perfect personality and to the intent of his mission in the world.

We might at once undertake to show that the gospels are trustworthy documents and that the evangelists are trustworthy witnesses and narrators. Perhaps it will be better, however, and more convincing to let first the apostle Paul speak in the writings no critic has dared to impugn, and which by common consent of all critics and historians, are considered absolutely authentic and genuine.

I. The testimony of the epistle to the Romans, the two epistles to the Corinthians and that to the Galatians. Paul certainly wrote these four epistles not longer than 22 to 25 years after the death of Christ. As he himself says, many eye-witnesses of Christ's resurrection were still alive, had also seen many of the great deeds Christ performed during the years of his public ministry. Now if Paul reports miracles to have taken place and the resurrection of Christ to be an assured fact, we can hardly conceive it possible that he should not tell the truth. Would he dare to state falsehoods in the face of many who could deny him and prove the contrary? But Paul also affirms that he himself had performed miracles among those to whom he writes, and in regard to these the danger was still greater that he might be shown up as one who cares not for the truth, in case he had not performed any.

1. Let us take up the latter first:

In apostolic times it was expected that miracles

would take place. As Christ performed them, they being the natural signs of his towering greatness, so the apostles and so the evangelist Stephen (Acts 6, 8) did. The founding period of Christianity would naturally differ from other times in the manifestation of greater power and a more abundant life. That power and life was seen above all in the transformation of individuals, in a pure heart and a consequent purity of action in the walk and conversation of Christians; but it would also show itself in signs and miracles. In Acts 7, 36 Stephen refers to Moses working great deeds in leading Israel out of Egypt, and through the wilderness; so we need not marvel that in early Christian times, when God's revelation culminated, His power should have shown itself most mightily.

At the time Paul wrote the epistle to the Galatians, as we conclude from Chap. 3, 5, miracles were still performed among them by at least some members of that church, elders, deacons or evangelists. Paul himself wrought mighty deeds among them when laboring in their midst and had set in motion the powers needed thereto, and the faith which could and would, when exigencies arose, make use of such power. 1 Cor. 12 relates how richly endowed the church at Corinth was with the gifts of the spirit. We read there repeatedly of the gift of healing and of working mighty deeds (performing miracles). Perhaps the gift of healing alludes to maladies more easily cured and the gift of working

miracles to diseases of a more virulent kind, or to giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, to cleansing of lepers, that is to cases which in those times defied the greatest skill of a medical science still in its infancy.

According to Paul's own statement, he performed miracles in Corinth (Rom. 15, 18, 19) and at other places. He may refer to such deeds as reported in Acts 13, 10, 11; 14, 8-10. When he found persons sick or when there were obstacles in the way of faith in the gospel, he preached, as in Acts 13, 11; 16, 16-18, and when it was conducive to the furtherance of the gospel, he would heal the sick and by mighty deeds execute divine justice. There were certainly not a few in these churches at Corinth and in Galatia, which had experienced the power of God through Paul in being cured of various diseases and ailments, and besides there were the churches themselves, a large membership in all these places, who had either been eye-witnesses or had it stated of eye-witnesses, who had seen such mighty deeds performed by the apostle. Would Paul dare to assert that he had wrought these mighty deeds among them, if it were not true? He refers to these things as something he need not dwell upon, and which would be at once understood by means of a simple allusion to them; how could he dare to speak thus, if these things had not actually occurred. He had been among them to found and more fully establish these churches only four or five years prior to writ-

ing to them these epistles. Many, if not all, of those he had healed were still alive; he could not speak of these things if what he wrote was not true. How easily they could have disproven him and given him the lie to his face, thus discrediting his apostleship and pleasing those false apostles, which were busy in overturning him and his work!

These his enemies were false teachers from Jerusalem, who pretended to speak by the authority of the apostles Peter, James, etc. (Acts 15, 1, 2; 1 Cor. 1, 10-12; Gal. 1, 6-9; Ch. 2, 4. 6-9.) Paul here shows the Galatians that he also was an apostle by the authority of God in Christ, that the three chief apostles, Peter, John and James, looked up to as pillars of the church, could claim no preeminence as compared with him, that in consultation with them they had agreed that Paul should be the apostle of the Gentiles, as they were of the Jews. Those false teachers might be able to wield a powerful argument against him, if Paul had not, like these chief apostles, performed miracles; but they never once dared to oppose him on this ground.

Some critics hold that in 2 Cor. 12, 11 and 12, Paul sarcastically refers to those false apostles and intimates that they pretend to be the chiefest apostles. Though even Meyer advocates this view, it cannot be correct. These false teachers lived, as it were, by pretending to act in accordance with the direction and by the authority of the three men (especially) referred to; independent of these they

would have been of little account, as they well knew. Not with these, therefore, does Paul compare himself, but with those three chief apostles. That they had performed miracles, especially Peter, was well known (see Acts 3, 1-8; 9, 33-42). It was expected of an apostle that in cases of necessity, he could perform miracles, as Peter, etc., had done, and Paul in 2 Cor. 12, 11 and 12, faced his adversaries on this very ground. He says: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." Let the false teachers, who endeavored to destroy his apostolic authority, prove the contrary, let them go among the Christians of Rome and Corinth, and in Galatia, and bring forth witnesses, which must be an easy matter, in case Paul performed no miracles, to the effect that his, Paul's claim to having healed the sick and to having wrought other mighty deeds, was mere pretense and no truth in it whatever. They might easily have understood the words above as such a challenge by Paul, but they never once impugned his truthfulness. Why not? Because the proofs of Paul having accomplished what he claims to have were too overwhelming.

There can, therefore, not be the least doubt but that Paul wrought mighty deeds, performed miracles. Preaching the gospel was, of course, his chief calling. But when, while doing this, and founding churches, there arose any occasion for furthering and strengthening his work by healing

the sick, and in other ways glorifying the Master's power he made use of such occasion to the best of his ability. Now if he and the other apostles wrought miracles, the Lord certainly cannot have gone through his public ministry without performing any. Peter and Paul never pretended to be able to perform such deeds of themselves, they always ascribe the glory to Christ and did what they did by his power, as is clear from Acts 3, 6 and 12; Rom. 15, 18, etc. If, then, it was through his power that they performed miracles, it were incomprehensible that when during his ministry occasion so often arose for healing the sick, cleansing lepers etc., he should never himself have made use of the power he so freely imparted to his servants. Thus we find it not only likely but certain that he wrought the miracles related of him in the gospels, which are entirely trustworthy documents.

Critics who affirm that miracles are impossible and have, consequently, not taken place, are thrown into a sorry plight by the fact that the narratives of miracles performed by Christ are found among his sayings and other things recorded of him. Now on the whole our critics hold these documents to be trustworthy in regard to the information given of the parables and other sayings of Christ, but re-themselves were not certain as to the reliability of reported miracles and they, nevertheless, gave them currency, how can we be sure that other parts, so closely connected with the reports of miracles, can

be relied on? Would not thereby their truthfulness throughout become uncertain? Would it not then appear as though the evangelists themselves were a party to the endeavor of early Christians alluded to and themselves helped fabricating stories to unduly glorify their Master? But men who fabricate a part of their narratives can hardly be trusted in regard to other parts of same. We thus see that our critics have no ground to stand upon; they must either throw "over board" the gospel narratives entirely or accept as trustworthy also the reports included of miraculous occurrences.

Their position is all the more untenable and ridiculous because of the fact that they either throw aside such reports as spurious or interpret them in such a way as to eliminate the miraculous element for the simple reason, that they declare miracles to be impossible. But such impossibility resides solely in their imagination. If the gospel documents are trustworthy in other respects, and the critics themselves say that they are, why then they are trustworthy also in their narration of miraculous events. If the narrative of a miracle can be shown upon good historical evidence to be spurious, then the critics have a right to exclude it; but if said narratives can stand the test of honest historical criticism, why then they must be accepted as relating the truth, any preconceived notion to the contrary notwithstanding.

2. Paul is a strong and reliable witness for the

truth of Christ's resurrection. He was a man of mighty intellect, a clear thinker and logical reasoner. A Pharisee and so very much attached to the Mosaic law and the prevailing religion of his people, that he became a foremost persecutor of the earliest church, he was suddenly converted and became a zealous disciple of Christ. It must have been a great and powerful event which influenced him so wonderfully and wrought this complete change in him. He himself dates his conversion from the time of the appearance of Christ to him on his way to Damascus (Acts 9 and parallel passages). Some critics say, that it was simply a subjective appearance, a vision taken by Paul to be an objective reality. But there cannot be the least doubt but that Paul himself considered it an objective fact. Paul well understood to distinguish between objective reality and a trance or vision. Indeed the historian and Peter could easily distinguish between the two, as we see from Acts 10. Peter never once thought that the vessel let down from heaven with beasts, etc., therein was an objective fact, he knew it was a vision and meditated upon what it might possibly mean. Paul was a cooler, more clear headed and intellectual man than was Peter, and it is certainly not likely that he should be less able to distinguish between a vision and an objective and real fact. In 2 Cor. 12, Paul describes, how he once was caught up into the third heaven. Fourteen years had passed, but he still knows distinctly that

it was a trance he then experienced, that in a vision he saw glorious things (Paradise) and that he heard words unutterable for poor mortal tongue. Of the event effecting his conversion, he speaks quite differently; he knows it was by the actual appearance of Christ from heaven, the latter still stands before him in all his glorious reality, as he had seen him on the way. He knows he was foreordained of God to preach the gospel and be an apostle (Gal. 1, 15 and 16), and he knows that he is an apostle because (among other reasons) he has seen Christ (1 Cor. 9, 1). One could not be an apostle without. When the question arose of electing a man in place of Judas Iscariot to the apostleship, it was given out as a necessary prerequisite, that he must have personally seen Christ (Acts 1, 21 and 22). It was not sufficient that a man have become acquainted with Christ personally while on earth, he must have actually seen him bodily after his resurrection (Acts 1, 22). Peter and the rest were well aware of the fact that without the knowledge of Christ's bodily resurrection, they would be cowards and unable to become witnesses of what they had heard him say and seen him do, nor of his death on the cross, since aside from his resurrection his death on the cross would have been the sure attestation of the complete failure of Christ's pretended mission. Thus the principal thing for an apostle was to be able to witness in behalf of the truth of Christ's actual bodily resurrection. Peter well knew that he him-

self could testify, and that he would not think of electing a man to the apostleship, who lacked this principal prerequisite. Paul knew all this. He had been the guest of Peter at Jerusalem for fifteen days (Gal. 1, 18). We may be certain that these two men conversed with one another about matters the most weighty, and that Peter narrated his experiences during the crucifixion and at and after the resurrection of his Lord, and that, on the other hand, Paul spoke of his experience on the road to Damascus, and of his subsequent experience at this place, and of what the Lord had done through him. Peter was fully convinced of Paul's genuine claim to the apostleship, or he would not have given Paul the right hand of fellowship and have acknowledged him as apostle of the Gentiles (Gal. 2, 10). Peter then put the appearance of Christ to Paul on the same level with the appearance of the risen Lord to him and the other apostles, and likewise Paul himself was fully convinced that he had seen the risen Lord the same as had Peter and the rest. In 1 Cor. 15, 5-8 Paul puts the appearance of the Lord to himself in the same category with his appearances to Peter and James and the other apostles. He knew perfectly well what he was doing, and the testimony of a man like Paul, of such cool reasoning powers, of such towering intellect and clear insight into the reality of things, is of the greatest importance.

Now in these his four great epistles, which no

critic of prominence has until now dared to impugn, we everywhere meet with notes of triumph by reason of the consciousness of Christ's living and abiding presence. He preached Christ and him crucified, but such a Christ proves the wisdom and the power of God because this same Christ was shown to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1, 4), without which fact no one could be freed from sin and justified (Rom. 4, 25). As death has no longer any dominion over the **risen** Christ, so sin cannot have over us if we be risen with Christ and thus, by virtue of his power, walk in newness of life (Rom. 6, 4, 9). It is the law of the risen Christ which makes free from the law of sin and death, and he it is who inspires a living faith which knows him as the most certain reality of life; those who thus possess his life and his spirit, may be certain that their mortal bodies will once be quickened like Christ's body was (Rom. 8, 2, 11; Gal 2, 20). These are but a few of the many jubilant notes sounded everywhere in these four epistles and clearly proving, that Paul was as certain of the risen and living Christ as he was of his own existence. He felt Christ was living within himself and he was thus possessed of a power enabling him to preach the gospel mightily and to overcome the obstacles in his way. He is convinced that this gospel of a crucified and risen Christ will conquer the world and bring it back to God (2 Cor. 5, 17-19).

Perhaps the most jubilant chapter of all in these

four epistles is 1 Cor. 15. More triumphantly the fact could not be expressed that through Christ sin and death have lost their power, and that now life is the dominant note throughout the world of mankind. He cries out: "O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory? . . . But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Nowhere else in the Bible is the resurrection of our mortal bodies spoken of at such length, and in so explanatory a manner, as here. The Corinthian Christians were mostly of Greek nationality and, therefore, were predisposed not to believe in the resurrection of the body. They believed in the immortality of the soul, Socrates and Plato had taught that long ago; but the body seemed to them a prison house of the soul, and unworthy of the latter. At death the soul would become free from such unworthy entanglements and enter its true element of spiritual mobility. Now that is not the Christian conception. The body is a genuine part of human existence and man incomplete without. This being the case, Christ came to redeem the body also, and if through death and corruption it forever loses its identity, and becomes non-existent, then a part of man's being is lost, as though it had never existed. That is an ultra spiritualistic view of things and not the biblical view. Mind, soul, spirit expresses itself through the body, and all the great works we behold in the world man could never have brought about without. Thus also what man

through faith appropriates of Christ's life and power is conveyed to the body as well, strengthens and ennobles this likewise. Not losing its identity by death and consequent corruption, but transformation and a glorious spiritual existence is the body's destiny. In the greater part of this 15th Ch. Paul tries to make this plain to those Corinthians, thus giving them also a more exalted view of Christ and his work.

He speaks as one enlightened by the Spirit of God and is so confident of arousing thought and effecting conviction, because he could point to a fact which was not called in question by them, and that was the resurrection of Christ. This they did not deny, according to verses 2 and 11, they had believed this part of the gospel Paul preached also. Here then was common ground to stand on.

The first thing Paul undertakes is to show them that Christ's resurrection involves the resurrection of the dead, this being included in the great plan of redemption and without which the latter could not be consummated. Indeed if Christ was not risen all that he had taught, done and suffered was of no account. Their own faith in that case was deceptive and of no value, and they were still in their sins. They would hardly own up to this, they rather felt happy in a Saviour's love, in the assurance of having their sins forgiven and being children of God through Christ. Well, all this was evidence strong and convincing that Christ was risen, and

that he was living within them by his Spirit and reigning in and over them. They entertained no doubt, as he well knew, as to the truth of Christ's resurrection.

And truly they need not, for aside of their own experience that truth rested on the surest foundation. And now he adduces his argument which could not be contradicted, certainly could not be set aside. Of course Paul knew that some women had testified to having seen the risen Christ and having heard him speak. But he does not allude to this fact. He refers only to men having seen Christ after his resurrection, and men of prominence at that. "Christ was seen of Peter, of all the apostles, especially of James, of above 500 brethren at once, and last of all he was seen of me also." In these few lines Paul enumerates at least 513 unimpeachable witnesses to the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead. Paul had cared little about what others said before his own conversion, and it is doubtful whether he had inquired into the matter at all, because his mind was fully made up as to this new sect of the Nazarenes and their head and Master. He verily supposed it to be a humbug from first to last and a dangerous heresy contravening his own and the belief of his people in those days. But after having himself seen the risen Christ and having become his disciple, he would naturally want to find out as much as he possibly could about the events of Christ's life, about his crucifixion and

death, and concerning his resurrection. There need not be the least doubt that he conversed with Peter, James, and the other apostles about the matter, as also with many of the 500 brethren. This would corroborate his own experience and strengthen his faith. He had remained in contact with many of all these men, as is clear from the fact that when writing to the Corinthians, 23 or 24 years after Christ had arisen, he knew that the greater part of those 500 were still alive. We may imagine, how minutely every detail of the things connected with Christ's resurrection and his appearances was gone over in their common conversation and how absolutely certain Paul was that in these his statements to the Corinthians, he was telling the bare truth in the fewest possible words, in order to leave not even the shadow of a doubt in their minds.

There need not be in our minds. Was Peter predisposed to expect an appearance of his Master whom he had so ignominiously denied? Just because he did not expect his Master's resurrection and reappearance was he so very despondent. Only the certain conviction of Christ having arisen could reassure him and inspire him with the hope that he possibly might be forgiven (John 21). James was a very matter of fact man. We may infer from his epistle, how practical he was and how little given to airy speculations or fantastic imaginings. This and other traits inspired confidence and fitted him for leadership, so that he soon acquired great influence

over the church at Jerusalem and in the management of the affairs of those early days. He was the last man to be easily deceived and to take an apparition to be the veritable Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and had been laid in the tomb. Among the other apostles there were men of robust intellect and one at least who would not easily believe even the combined evidence of his ten fellows apostles, only the bodily appearance of his risen Master could convince him (John 20, 24-29). He was not in a state of mind to be easily deceived, he would not take a ghost-like apparition to be his risen Master; nay, verily, he had rather demanded evidence he himself could not control, would not believe unless he himself saw the wounded side and the prints those nails had made in his Master's hands and feet. The evidence was overwhelming even to his skeptical mind, and he cries out: "My Lord and my God!" And may we not justly suppose that many of those 500 brethren were likewise men of clear vision, of strong minds and endowed with sound reasoning powers?

The evidence could hardly be stronger. Singly, deception might have been possible, if only one or two professed to have seen him, we might be justified in doubting. But here are a number of independent witnesses each of whom tells the same story. Then at one time ten robust men see the risen Christ in their midst, and at another time these same ten with skeptical Thomas added. It is hardly possible that they all could have been deceived; if it had not

seemed to be their own Master in his well known boidly form, some one would most assuredly have detected it. Those men were in a measure children of nature, robust and strong, their nerves were not unstrung, as is the case with so many nowadays, who would be much more likely to be deceived than those strong, healthy men with sound eyes and ears. Ten of them, eleven of them, indeed, 500 of them, how could they possibly have been deceived, all of them? In court criminals are often convicted on circumstantial evidence, often put to death upon the evidence of two witnesses known to be trustworthy. Here there are 513 witnesses and all testify to the same fact, and any one even now should dare to deny their veracity and doubt their having seen the risen Lord? !

If these men had some great advantages to gain by testifying as they did, one might, perhaps, dare to halt and doubt their truthfulness. But the reverse is the case. It was to their personal advantage from a worldly point of view to deny Christ's resurrection, to fall in with the Jewish way of thinking, to adhere to the religion of the temple and the synagogue. This is especially the case in regard to Paul. He had the brightest of prospects before him in case he remained true to traditional Judaism. A pupil of Gamaliel, he might have left his teacher far behind in the race for preeminence among his people. In Philip. 3 he speaks of the brightness of his prospects from this standpoint. Positions the most

prominent and influential he might have attained and occupied in the course of time, if he had only put aside all thought of becoming a disciple of Christ, of becoming a member of the despised sect of the Nazarenes. How absolutely certain he must have been of the truth of Christ and his resurrection, in order to brush aside all these advantages and bright worldly prospects! How certain he must have been that he was not beating the air, but that Christ and his religion were the most reliable of verities that enabled him triumphantly to exclaim: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. . . ., that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings." Again and again it clearly shines forth from his words, that it was the unwavering consciousness of the truth of Christ's resurrection and life, which made him so confident of success and so joyous in the midst of trials and afflictions. Even death seemed glorious to him, if he could suffer it for the Master and while endeavoring to enhance his glory and extend the borders of his kingdom. He looked martyrdom in the face without flinching and cries out triumphantly: "For I am now ready to be offered up and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course.

I have kept the faith.” These and the words above are in perfect accord with those triumphant notes we have spoken of in the four great epistles of Paul. Evidently his faith, his energetic apostleship, his joy amid tribulation and persecution and his notes of triumph even in the face of a martyr’s death is bound up in his buoyant consciousness of the risen Christ.

It is the same with the other apostles. Undoubtedly Paul had more to lose than they, because of his superior education and greater natural ability. On the other hand it ought not to have been easier under the circumstances to dissuade the rest from adherence to the Master for the reason, that they were born and raised in the Holy Land and that the traditions of their fathers were ingrained in their very life blood. And they were likewise men of strong intellect and clear vision. To remain steadfast followers of Christ in the face of the antagonism of their nearest kinsmen, in opposition to the scribes and Pharisees, yea, even thus antagonizing the priests and high priests of their people, the conservators of tradition and the oracles of old, must have required tremendous effort on their part, the sufficiency for which they could find only and alone in the firm conviction that Christ was the promised Messiah, that he had by his teaching, his deeds, his death and above all his triumphant resurrection, shown himself to be the Son of man and the Son of God, and that there could, therefore, be no

doubt but that he would override all obstacles and bring to a successful issue the affairs of his kingdom.

They were well aware of the consequence to them and theirs which such faith in Christ involved. Though under different circumstances, all could have made the words of Paul their own in Acts 20, 22-24: "And now behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But none of these things move me, neither do I count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." We see in chapters 3, 4, 7 and 12 of the Acts, how they were called on to suffer persecution and even death, and how they must have known that violence and a martyr's end awaited them if they persisted in preaching the gospel and extending the sway of that Christ whom the chief men of their people had put to death. Now, certainly, the fact that they persisted and never for a moment turned aside to do the bidding of their all-powerful adversaries, is proof conclusive of the truth of Christ's resurrection. If the conviction in their minds of Christ's actual resurrection had not been as firm as the eternal hills, can anyone suppose for a moment, that they would have persisted in propagating their false faith and endeavoring to

make others believe what they themselves knew to be false and a deception? Who ever heard or has ever read of men of sound mind so extremely foolish and idiotic as to persist in a course which brought upon them persecution and almost certain death, when by adhering to the truth and in so doing stating what their adversaries desired was sure to release them from all danger and to bring them worldly prosperity and happiness? Those denying Christ's resurrection at the present day are not ignorant enough to believe such a thing possible, and they, therefore, affirm that the apostles indeed held Jesus to have actually arisen from the dead, but that this their faith rested not on sufficient evidence, that it was rather the result of delusion, of their expectant state of mind at the time, of an inward vision brought on by hallucination. In other words, the apostles expected that their Master would again arise and, therefore, that by reason of such eager expectation they saw him. But the evangelists say the reverse, the disciples did not expect his resurrection, they could not understand the Master's prediction to this effect, they rather supposed that his death ended all and forever precluded the success of his cause—and it was just this which made them so despondent. For proof we need only to point to Luke 24, (we may also to John 20, the case of Mary Magdalene). Not until by the Master's repeated appearances they were perfectly certain of his identity, certain that it was the same Jesus which

had been crucified and laid into the tomb, not until this had been established beyond doubt in their minds did despondency, sorrow and downheartedness leave them and give way to assurance and an abundant joy.

Hallucination soon subsides. The so-called Pentecostal movement of hardly ten years ago is a case in point. It originated in Los Angeles, Cal. Two Swedish women seem to have been present and there to have imbibed the spirit of the movement. They went back into the homeland, agitated in behalf of the movement, and after a while brought it over into Germany. At first it took here with the Free Church coventicles, but afterward spread also in various places of the established church. One of its influential pastors even took it under his protecting care and helped to forward the movement.

It was called **Pentecostal**, though in fact it had little in common with the facts of Pentecost as portrayed in Acts 2. It rather might have been compared with what Paul in 1 Cor. 14 calls talking in an unknown tongue. The Apostle here says, that a man who speaks in an unknown tongue speaketh to God and only thereby edifies himself, so that he cannot compare in usefulness and true worth with the man who prophesieth, since this man edifieth others. Those talking in so-called unknown tongues in the recent movement, really talked nonsense, for what they said was a combination of syllables, which nobody could have arranged into words conveying

sound sense and meaning. The hollowness of the movement would have at once been apparent, were it not for the fact that influential men and women and hundreds and thousands even swayed by it seemed so filled with the spirit that it was considered a work of the Holy Ghost. But after a while the results of the movement were not such as could possibly have been produced by divine power, but that it must rather have sprung from a source altogether different. The eyes of people were opened more and more to see its vagaries and follies, and even its dangers. The sober sense of Christians was carried away by it into extreme fanaticism. The Spirit of God could not possibly have anything to do with a movement which lead people astray into paths not of genuine enthusiasm, but of fanaticism gone mad. Thus men of cool heads soon showed it up in its hollowness and its danger to the real interests of the kingdom of God. The movement in consequence became less aggressive, lost its power to influence people more and more, and after some time subsided altogether. There have been cases in history where thousands have been swayed by hallucination, but soon one and then the other and then a number of deceived ones sobered down and again became aware of actual reality. Such would have been the case with the apostles and their adherents, had they been the subjects of hallucination. Having sobered down and become aware that they had only supposed to have seen their Master, but that in

fact he had remained in the grave, they would most assuredly have turned their backs upon their former faith as not supported by evidence. In that case they would have soon reoccupied their former places among the people and have become bigoted and fanatical, like the Pharisees. They would then have gloried in being Jews and more eagerly than before have exalted the verities of the old faith.

This certainly was not the attitude of Paul. He upbraids the Galatians (Ch. 1) for permitting themselves to be influenced by false apostles who would pervert the gospel of Christ. The crucified and risen Christ was the sum and substance of Paul's gospel. He is so certain of the absolute truth of this gospel that he says: "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." And in 1 Cor. 15. 15 he declares it to be a question of veracity, thus branding himself before that great church at Corinth a liar, if Christ was not arisen from the dead, as he had clearly testified and adduced the other apostles as witnesses likewise. "In that case we are found false witnesses of God, because testifying of God that He raised up Christ whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." And Peter is no less sure and confident. He and John face the Sanhedrin, the chief priests and Pharisees (Acts 3 and 4) and accuse them of having killed Christ and that he and John cannot possibly desist from preaching his gospel, because

they know him to have arisen from the dead and that through him God will give even them, his willful murderers, repentance and life, if they will but repent and believe. "Be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole."

Undoubtedly a question of veracity. If Christ's body remained in the tomb, which the evangelists and apostles testify of having seen and touched and having heard his well known voice, why then they are ,everyone of them, fals witnesses, liars. They themselves state this to be the alternative: either Christ actually arose from the grave and their testimony of having seen him is true and reliable, or he did not raise and their testimony is false and they willfully told falsehoods. But if they were liars and worthless fellows, then the inexplicable mystery is this: These liars and false apostles were wonderfully active in preaching their false gospel, in their eager energy they overcame all obstacles, endured the greatest hardships, were full of joy under the severest persecutions and faced a martyr's death with the name of Jesus on their exultant lips. Further, these liars and imposters engendered, by their preaching, a living faith in the risen Master who had not arisen, a faith which produced a true reformation of life, produced the best of virtues, purified the heart, the life, the family, society, and is to day,

after 19 centuries, as full of great possibilities as it ever was. Indeed, in the case above put the church of 19 centuries, the triumph of Christianity in civilizing and enlightening so many peoples of the earth and establishing the true and most exalted principles of righteousness, of sympathy, mercy and love with the numberless streams of benefaction flowing therefrom into all the world, all this is based upon and is the consequence of a bundle of lies and falsehoods. Simply to state the case thus is to show its absurdity. Infidels may strut about and parade their intellectuality, their great insight and critical acumen, in fact they are ignoramuses, everyone of them. We do not profess to be able to solve all the riddles and mysteries of the faith in the divinely human Christ and his resurrection; enigmas will ever remain too great for the human mind to explain with all the clearness of noonday. But the skeptic and infidel and unbelieving critic must exercise faith as well and the only question is, which faith rests on the better evidence and is most in accordance with reason. Now there can be no doubt as to which is thus best supported, and which harmonizes best with reason. The unbelieving critic's assertion has no evidence to rest upon, on the contrary, he must contradict all evidence, must contradict the testimony of eye-witnesses, must assert that he knows better what has happened 19 centuries ago than do the men who were present at the time and affirm most emphatically that they tell the truth and

nothing but the truth. Now it is indeed preposterous to put up such a claim. And, further, the unbelieving critic must hold that from darkness there came light, that from falsehood there sprang truth, that from preaching of a false gospel by men of perverted intellects and degraded hearts (for a willful liar is certainly a degraded man) there flowed streams of healing, of purity and life. If all this gives such critics, skeptics and infidels any consolation and delight, they are welcome to it. It seems to me any man with good common sense will turn away from their teachings and will read his Bible more eagerly and joyously than ever.

11. The testimony of the gospels as to the occurrence of miracles and the truth of Christ's resurrection.

If a man possessed a friend whom he had for many years found perfectly reliable, he would not easily disbelieve statements in a letter from him concerning happenings of rather an extraordinary nature. Knowing that his friend would not wilfully tell a falsehood and confident that he meant to relate the truth, he would believe those statements unless the best of evidence demonstrated their falsity. You and I may feel similarly toward the Bible. We have ever found it reliable in regard to things of a spiritual import, respecting the great religious and moral truths on which depends our spiritual well-being, and we cannot persuade ourselves from the start that in other things and in describing occurrences of ordinary or extraordinary importance, it

should be unreliable and not worthy of our confidence. Some years ago certain men attempted to show that the Old Testament was dependent throughout on Babylon and its relation thereto for whatever of greatness it might possess. But it has since been found that the religious literature of Babylon and Assyria is far inferior to the Old Testament, that here alone we find the truth that God is one, and from documents also in Egypt and other countries, from the monuments or documents in stone and brick it appears clearly that the biblical writers relate the truth in regard to places, persons and dates.

More in particular as to the evangelists and apostles there can be no doubt but that they wanted to tell the truth and nothing else. They were either themselves eye-witnesses or received their information from such who were and, therefore, were in a position to know and make their words suit the facts. It would be difficult in the extreme to prove that Mark or Luke, Matthew or John made a single mistake in mentioning names and localities of cities and villages, or in alluding to any part of the temple, or when speaking of taxes, military affairs or affairs of administration. What they say about such things is in perfect accord with the records of contemporary scribes and historians. Now and then a statement seemed almost and was even ridiculed as erroneous for a while, but in every case farther research proved it correct. All this really demonstrates that the sacred writers lived at the time of

the events before the destruction of Jerusalem; men of later date would, of necessity, have written such history very differently, because after the destruction of Jerusalem things were so entirely changed. John undoubtedly wrote his gospel and epistles after that event, but he had been an eye-witness and had either taken notes or possessed a remarkably retentive memory: Of all the gospels his is the most minute and life-like as to details and occurrences. And John well knew why he could be so particular and trustworthy. He says: "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the word of life; and these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

As stated before, liberal critics like Harnack, no less than men like Weisz agree in declaring the gospels and the epistles authentic and genuine, written by the authors whose names they bear (or the gospels in part on certain tradition, that of Mark especially on data given him by the Apostle Peter). Therefore, it is unnecessary to go into detail and prove what is conceded. Most has been said against the authorship of St. John, and still, if anything, his is most certain. Only an eye-witness could speak as he does. His portrayal of facts, persons, places, events is so plastic and full of life, that falsification is out of the question. The French infidel, Renan, spurns the idea that anyone else but John could have written the fourth gospel. The other gospels were by writers alluded to earlier than the fourth;

but this is natural, since it was written at least 20-25 years later. Ignatius (died about 117) was a disciple of John and quite clearly alludes to passages in the writings of John and has partly made the ideas of the latter his own. Ireneus, a disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was a disciple of John, writes about the year 177 and mentions expressly and by name all the four gospels and their authors and states that John, Christ's disciple of love, wrote last of all while he lived at Ephesus in Asia Minor. In his four books against heretics he made use of no less than 400 passages in the gospels. Now is it not likely that a man living so near the events and acquainted with such who had themselves seen and heard the apostles was a trifle better informed than certain men of the 20th century who deny miracles, because these contradict their preconceived notions? !

A conclusive proof for the reliability of the gospels and epistles in regard to the question of miracles are heretical writers of those early days. Both Jewish and Gentile writers, e. g., Celsus and Porphyry, fought Christianity with might and main and endeavored to show that there were errors and contradictions in the gospels, but they never once called in question their authenticity and genuineness; so those heretics had nothing to say against them in this regard, on the contrary, tried to prove their false doctrines and conceptions by means of the gospels and epistles, thus showing that they in no way doubted their reliability. Now how easy it

would have been to deny the truthfulness of the gospels entirely by saying, like some "wise" critics of the present do: "Foolishness, ye Christians, to fall back upon the gospels to prove your teachings, for they are worthless documents, they were not written by their reputed authors but by unknown scribes, who tried to impose on a believing world." That would have been the thing to do, if evidence were wanting for the authorship of apostles and evangelists and for the truthfulness of their reputed writings. But never once do we meet in the abundant literature of this type any assertion or even intimation of this kind. Proof conclusive, certainly, that it was universally known, accepted and believed that the gospels were reliable and truthful history.

At the time Paul wrote the epistles to the Corinthians, there were still many living, we found, who had with their own eyes seen the risen Christ. The nearer the events the larger was the number of eye-witnesses still living. Was this the reason that the hostile Jews never once during the ministry of Christ denied the fact of his having performed miracles? Even the scribes and Pharisees who continually opposed him and finally brought him to the cross, admitted his miracles, but several times upbraided him with being in league with the devil and performing his miracles, notably casting out demons or evil spirits, by the devil's aid (Matth. 9 and 12; Mark 3, and Luke 11). If they could have produced witnesses testifying that the healing power said to be in Christ's possession was fictitious, that

they had been only apparently healed and were still sick with their old maladies; how eagerly they would have brought forth such witnesses, so that by their testimony the pretensions of Christ might have been proven false! But never once is there even the slightest indication of such a step. The nearest approach to one we find in John 9. Scribes and Pharisees in the case of the man born blind want to know of his parents, whether he was their son and the same one who was born blind, and then of the man himself, whether his sight had indeed been restored by Christ and how. Though Christ's supernatural power could in this case not be denied, it only enrages them and makes them all the more determined to oppose him. How they would have exulted if at any time they could have produced a blind man, or one lame or deaf, or a leper on whom Christ had tried his healing power in vain. In Matth. 8 and in Mark 7 and 10, and in Luke 7, it is reported a leper was healed, a man sick of the palsy, one deaf, one blind, and that a young man and only son of a widow was raised from the dead. In each case there were hundreds near by watching and noticing what was going on. How easy it would have been to disprove these reputed cures, if they had not taken place. The blind man at Jerico was admonished by Christ's disciples not thus loudly to cry after Christ, others also tried to help pacify him: but all to no avail, and Christ opens his eyes by the word of his power. Hundreds and thousands could have testified to the contrary, if indeed the blind

man had remained blind or the evangelists reported what never took place. When the first three gospels were written, especially that of Mark, there undoubtedly were many still alive on whom Christ had tried his skill. If the evangelists reported falsely in a single case, those scribes and Pharisees (some of them certainly were then living) or their successors and men of the same spirit, could easily have shown up these writers as liars and falsifiers. And such an attempt or exposure would certainly have gained wide currency, everybody would have talked about it. But we find no indication anywhere of the occurrence of any such thing.

It is the same in regard to the resurrection of Christ. If he did not arise and no one saw him and identified him, as e. g. Thomas is reported to have done (John 20); why the truth could easily have been ascertained. Think of the 500 men (1 Cor. 15) reported to have seen the risen Christ at the same time; if this was only an idle report, gossip of the street without fact to rest upon, why it was only necessary for some Jews or Gentiles to inquire into the matter, to question these men still surviving about it. They would gladly have told the truth, if indeed, they did not see the risen Christ as reported. The delusion would have been dissipated and resolved into thin air.

Faith in the risen Christ must have aroused anew the ire of scribes and Pharisees. Chapters 3 and 4 of the Acts indicate this clearly. Peter tells them that they are murderers, but that God will forgive them

if they repent and believe. No wonder their wrath was kindled, they would have literally torn the two apostles to pieces if they had not feared that the multitude would side with them. Scribes and Pharisees with the high priests supposed the cross had made an end of Jesus and his pretensions. They had trumped up charges in order to do away with him and his messiahship. In Matth. 27, 63-66 we find the accusation on the strength of which, Pilate having delivered up Jesus, they put him to death. **It was in their interest that he remain dead.** To preclude all possibility of foul play on the part of his disciples, they demanded of Pilate a strong guard, and Roman soldiers always did their duty. That they should have been bribed to tell a falsehood and say they had slept (which was certain death for a Roman watch) shows in what straits the accusers and murderers of Christ were brought by the unequivocal news of his triumphant resurrection. They would have gladly given any sum of money to anyone who could have produced the dead body proven to be that of Christ. In case the reported resurrection was a farce, nothing could have been easier. The Sanhedrin might have sent a committee of their own number to the sepulchre, and Pilate would have had a guard of soldiers accompany them, to find out whether it was empty or not, and if not, to hold an inquest over the dead body and report their findings to the full body at a regular session, or one convened for the purpose. And such findings would not have remained a common saying

only among unbelieving Jews, it would have easy and wide currency among all people and would have at once precluded any effort on the part of the apostles and others to preach the gospel of a crucified and **risen** Christ (Matth. 28, 12-15). The greatest movement of all times, the spread of Christianity, would have been nipped in the bud. It is preposterous to suppose that such a possibility was open to them and that they did not make use of it. These enemies of Jesus were wily fellows and they would have made use of any opportunity offering itself to prove, that Jesus was indeed the impostor as which they had branded him. That they did not do so demonstrates conclusively that no such opportunity was given them, that, consequently, there was no body to be found in the grave so well known and marked.

Or could the apostles and other disciples have willingly been duped or have been aware of their error and still continue to believe and afterwards in notes of triumph preach the gospel of a risen redeemed? Unbelievers today would have us think of them as visionaries who believed they had seen the Christ, but this was the Christ as immortal spirit and not in the glorified body put in the grave. Indeed foolish visionaries these men of clear intellect and steady heart! Willing and full of courage to preach a gospel, the falsity of which they might easily have found out. Why did they not go to the sepulchre and find the dead body of their Master! They did go to the sepulchre, also those women

(Matth. 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20), but found it vacant. Mary Magdalene supposes someone might possibly have taken away the body and felt strong enough in her love to the Master to carry it, if she only knew from where. Certainly the disciples would have gladly assisted and they all would in sorrow and almost perfect despair have performed the funeral rites in memory of their Lord. But Peter and John also found the grave empty, and the latter, perceiving that the order in which the wrappings lay precluded the possibility of theft, saw and believed.

There is no doubt but that the disciples saw the grave empty. Paul had learned this of Peter in the fifteen days' stay with him (Gal. 1, 18). The empty grave and the appearances of the risen Christ are the two unmistakable proofs of his resurrection. The last chapter of Matthew, Mark and Luke and the last two of John together with Acts 1, 1-9 and 1 Cor. 15, 1-8, are not easily harmonized in all their details, but all these passages agree in holding to the two facts indicated. Critics and unbelievers have made much of the differences to be seen in these passages, they even speak of contradictions; but they cannot deny that in view of the empty grave and in the consciousness of having seen the very Christ in his glorified body, the same body which was laid in the grave, only glorified, they all overcame their former sorrow and despondency and were filled with joy to do and to suffer for their risen Master.

What stronger proof can be required? Suppose all the passages in any way speaking of Christ's resurrection were in perfect accord without the least discrepancy or even difference; would that not look suspicious? Is history so written? Grant wrote a history of his campaigns in the civil war, others described in part the same actions, but quite differently. So in other cases. It depends a great deal from what point of view a history is written, both as to description of the whole and of details and the coloring given to it. The very fact that there are so many differences in the resurrection story as given by the several writers makes that story life-like, and is exactly what we might expect. The evangelists were not learned historians bound to get after all the possible events, to put them all in exactly the correct setting of place, time and circumstance, in order to present a comparatively scientific whole. If they had left us a life of Jesus of this kind, it would very likely be quite colorless and without that charm and power which so impresses every attentive reader and brings him under the spell of Christ's unique personality. The evangelists were rather influenced by the impression of what they saw and heard, or of what others had seen and heard made on them, and it was their aim to give the words of the Master and the events of his life as accurately as they could. This was the way which showed how they honored and loved him. To embellish and overdraw would have dishonored him, and the thought of doing so never once entered

their minds. The facts were great enough and taxed all their powers of expression. They were so engrossed by what they saw and heard or by what others had seen and heard, that they found no occasion and that it never entered their minds to go beyond this. And all this we find to be the case respecting their narrative of Christ's resurrection.

Because this great event was so unexpected to them, so entirely foreign to the way of Jewish thinking, it took them wholly by surprise. Time could not efface the recollections of those hours and days of rapid and wonderful surprises. The narratives show abundant traces thereof. The disciples and apostles had abandoned all hope after the burial of the Master. The visions of a glorious Messianic kingdom entertained by them had vanished. Those short years of converse with him seemed a dream the hopes of which were never to be realized. Sorrow, dejection, despair took hold upon them. Whenever and wherever they met, they spoke of the past and told one another what the Master once was to them, and how gloomy all looked since he was gone. They could, of course, not help visiting the grave as soon as it could be done without fear of the guard, and when they had been informed of the disappearance of the Roman soldiers, they went there in groups of two or more. They found the story of the women to be true: the grave was empty. They saw no angels, as the women had done. Their nerves were stronger, and they were matter of fact men. They don't seem to have had much confidence in reports of the

women, and certainly do not rest their case upon any surmises. They can relate what they themselves had seen and what other eye-witnesses had told them.

The empty grave they saw repeatedly. At first it did not reassure them. Had the body been taken away by some designing person or persons? But already that first afternoon the risen Christ appeared unto Peter, then to the two disciples on their way to Emmanus, here sitting down to a meal with them and recognized at once by his peculiar way of saying thanks and the breaking of bread. A spirit cannot break bread; no doubt remained in their minds as to his identity, though he could disappear in the twinkling of an eye. Arising from the dead could not have left his body as it was. It was now spiritual and he had perfect control over it, something like we have over our thoughts, being able in them to travel thousands of miles in a second. His appearance on the evening of that first Easter was mysterious, but the ten disciples could not doubt that it was he (Luke 24, 36-43; John 20, 19-23). He showed them his hands and feet, and he even tasted of some honey. Not sure but what it might be an apparition simply they were asked to come near and touch him and feel for themselves, that he was not a spirit or ghost but that he still had a body, though a glorified one, over which he had perfect control and which, by the power of his will, he might assume a form like the one which they had often beheld. They looked him in the eye, they took

him by the hand and were now reassured of his identity.

A week later Thomas was with the rest undoubtedly at the same place. The others had told him before about their blessed experience with the Master, told him concerning his appearance to the two Emmaus disciples and his appearance to them a week ago. But he was a skeptic and would not believe. He was a man like many an unbeliever nowadays: he wanted to see and handle himself in order to be sure of the thing he was to believe. This way of looking on things and this demand for visible evidence, for evidence presenting itself to the senses is not nearly as reasonable and certain as many people nowadays think. The great principles and laws of nature are invisible, and still we are perfectly sure of their truth. Of course in the case of Christ's resurrection Thomas could not really be blamed, because he wanted to be sure and to see for himself, as he held that perhaps the others might possibly have been deceived. That was a fault on his part. He might have and ought to have believed on the strength of the testimony of the rest. Had they not just as sound senses as Thomas himself? Suppose that now we all would go on the principle of Thomas and not believe anything as true and reliable unless we ourselves had seen and handled. The circle of our knowledge in that case would certainly be very narrow. Our knowledge of history would be very insignificant and decidedly circumscribed. And how about geography? Many of

us have never been in Europe, Asia, South America or Africa; and still we do not doubt in the least as to these continents. So Thomas should have believed the testimony of his brethren or fellow disciples.

Perhaps it was on account of his great regard and love to and for his Master that he wanted to be doubly sure about his having arisen and being alive much in the form and in the way he formerly was. And Jesus was kind and loving enough to appear to him also in the midst of the rest. Jesus accommodates himself to the sceptical turn of Thomas' mind and asks him to use his fingers and his hand and thus to make sure of the wound in the side and the prints of the nails in hands and feet. The evidence was overwhelming even to the mind of Thomas. "My Lord and my God" he exclaimed.

With the appearance to seven of his disciples narrated in the 21st Chapter of John the Lord manifests his miraculous power, his authority and also his great love to Peter. Whether that wonderful draught of fishes was the result of his power or a token of his superhuman knowledge we do not know; the fact seemed wonderful to those disciples and John was at once convinced that the man who had been standing on the beach and had directed how they should cast their net into the sea, was the Lord. And impulsive Peter at once swims out to meet him before the others could land with the fishes. Not one of the seven doubted in the least as to the identity of their Master. What a conversa-

tion with Peter who so short time ago had denied him thrice! Three times the question: Lovest thou me, lovest thou me more than these, as he really had boasted in that night when saying: If all leave thee, I shall not, I'll even die in thy behalf.

The 500 brethren to whom he appeared were undoubtedly with the apostles (see Matth. 28) on yon mountain of Galilee where Jesus spoke of his power and authority to send them into all the world to disciple all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Triune God. How that event must have imprinted itself upon their memories! "Some doubted" see Math. 28, 17. The word "doubted" in the original Græek rather means **hesitated**. Those present did not doubt the truth of Christ's resurrection or that the one speaking to them was their Lord and Master; but as yet they were not certain whether or not they should accord him divine honors by praying to him.

In the foregoing and in the proper place we have spoken of the force of the evidence thus at hand. We can hardly imagine a clearer case or demand stronger evidence. And still there is another evidence which may be deemed stronger because coming from enemies.

The testimony of the enemies as given in the latter part of Matth. 28 is, perhaps, most conclusive. It has reference only to the empty grave, but just this is of the highest importance. Roman soldiers had, upon the petition of the high priests and the Sanhedrin been placed as guards around the sepulchre.

The stone in front was sealed by Pilate's signet ring, an emblem of Roman authority and power. He had selected the most trustworthy men, we may be sure, in whom he could place full confidence. When at the moment of the shining angel's descent, his putting away the stone from the door of the sepulchre and the resurrection of Jesus the earth trembled like it does at the time of an earthquake, the Roman guards fell to the ground. When, after some moments they collected themselves sufficiently and saw the open sepulchre and then convinced themselves that the body of Jesus was gone, they feared for their lives and at once ran to the high priests and elders and told all they knew about the occurrence. They are told that Pilate shall be quieted (by money of course), and they need not fear. They now feel somewhat reassured, but deem it the better part of wisdom to see and speak with Pilatae themselves.

They say to the astute governor: You know that we are brave soldiers and have proven this on many a battle field. We have kept perfect watch and everything was in perfect order until near sunrise something like an earthquake mightily shook the ground, at the same time there seemed to come down from above something like a streak of flaming lightning. We fell to the ground, and when in a few minutes we aroused ourselves the grave was open, the stone in front put away and the body of the dead Jesus was no longer present. No human power would have been able to get the body, but in this case we were powerless.

Pilate answers, that in an ordinary case he would have to pronounce the sentence of death upon them; but this was an extraordinary occurrence and he could not well punish them but would have to let them go free.

The bribes given to Pilate by the Sanhedrin only go to prove, how the high priests and elders did not want the story of Jesus' resurrection to be noised abroad and how they wanted the people to believe that the disciples stole the body. But their efforts were of no avail. The disciples could not keep secret what they had seen with their own eyes and which assured them perfectly of the truth of the gospel of Jesus, and of the truth of his resurrection. It was this their consciousness of the truth which made them joyous even amid trials, afflictions and persecutions and imbued them with the spirit of triumphant faith. It gave their preaching its abundant life and triumphant power. It enabled Peter and John to say to their persecutors: "Is it right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God? For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." Many years thereafter Peter can with the same joyous triumph exclaim (1 Peter 1, 3): "Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." At the conclusion of his incontrovertible argument (1 Cor. 5) Paul can affirm: "But now Christ is risen from the dead." "Like as Christ was raised

up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." "The Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelling in you he shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you." If we are true believers, we can exclaim even now with Paul: "O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The gospel of Christ is adapted to the needs of men as much today as it ever was, and it is making conquests the same as it did in early Christian times. For this gospel is today the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. We see this at home among all classes of society, and we see it in the heathen world. The ignorant and even savage tribes and peoples of Africa and the islands of the sea respond to its message and are transformed and elevated by its power, and the civilized peoples of Japan, India and China alike respond to its enlivening touch. The gospel message is one of joy also for them, transforming the individual and elevating entire people unto a higher plane of living. Other religions, like Confucianism and Mohammedanism, have spent their power and can no longer satisfy the longing and aspirations of their adherents, while Christianity is still the power that maketh for civilization, culture, enlightenment and righteousness.

The End.

